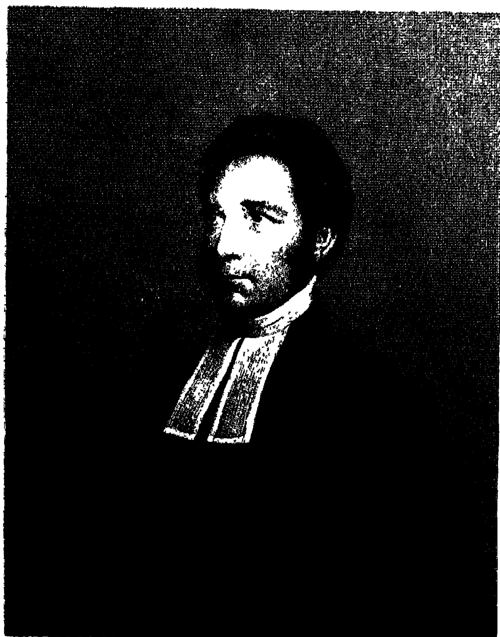


Yours Sincerely
Josias Wilson

MEMOIR

OF

THE LIFE AND LABOURS

OF THE LATE

REV. JOSIAS WILSON,

LONDON.

BY H. HASTINGS, M.D.,

OXON

With Introductory Observations,

BY THE REV. JOHN BRYSON, LL.D.,

WOLVERHAMPTON.

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TO THE

PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATIONS

OF

TASSAGH, DROGHEDA, TOWNSEND STREET, BELFAST,

AND

RIVER TERRACE, LONDON,

OVER WHOM THE

REV JOSIAS WILSON HAD, FOR SOME TIME THE PASTORATE

This Memoir

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED BY

THE EDITOR.

STOKENCHURCH, OXON, *March* 1, 1850.

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

THE world is fast approaching to the true idea of biographical literature. We have been, for the most part, hitherto accustomed to balance the weight of posthumous worth against the bulk of the raw materials bequeathed to posterity ; whereas, it is evident that an individual remains of consequence, not in proportion to the things which he leaves behind him in the world, but more in the ratio in which his own actions and enjoyments aroused others to similarly act and enjoy. A biography is not, moreover, to be viewed in the light of a mere will, the contents of which affect only the objects and parties therein described ; nor would it be just to conceive of biographers as so many stereotyped executors, who dare not, without doing violence to testamentary documents, take favourable notices of the varied wants of our common humanity.

The life of him who, in his day and generation, resembled the benevolent and beneficent Jesus, we regard as most worthy of being embodied in the records of the world. Like that of the latter, it may not contain much to excite to the pursuit of mere intellectual improvements ; but if it reveals the man of pure motive and philanthropic action, posterity ought to recognise in it a utility which will bless

when all worldly influences shall have been obliterated from the tablet of human remembrance.

In the accompanying memoir of one, whose whole life may be described as one continuous presentation of "a rosary, or chaplet of good works, to his Maker,"* it is to be hoped that the private Christian will find much to interest and edify, and which a sanctified memory will have reason to recall with pious gratitude.

Our hopes, however, of its enlarged and permanent utility, are chiefly directed to those impulses for good, which its study is fitted to impart to the labours of the Christian pastor.

It is precisely for this reason that we look with a friendly eye upon this and similar emanations of the press. The more of them the better for the ministry of the Word. Great as may be the benefit resulting to the preacher from a study of those elementary treatises, the design of which is to add greater attractiveness to his message, by imparting to it a systematic and pleasing delivery, he will discover, in clerical biography, a much shorter and better road to pulpit success. The intelligent and devoted ambassador of Christ will not fail to perceive our meaning, when we refer to the spirit and love for proclaiming His glorious message, which the perusal of the lives of eminent predecessors in his office is customary to inspire. We spend many anxious hours over those "aids" to ministerial usefulness which have been, from time to time, put forth in the spirit of the truest benevolence, and we feel thankful for them ; but it is seldom experienced, we

* Bishop Jeremy Taylor.

think, by their most diligent student, that they give warmth to the heart, or much unction to discourse. Far be it from us to undervalue that pulpit training, which now rightfully takes to itself the character of a science. All that we contend for is, simply, that the aspirant to ministerial success will find a readier way to it in the study of the "life and labours" of those who may have arisen to this loftiest of human elevations, than in any abstract attention to unmoving theoretical books. These books, at the same time, have done good service in effecting successive improvements in the advancing science of pulpit oratory.

In the early days of the Gospel, its preachers did not follow the rules of art. They had, for the most part, more unerring guides to the minds and hearts of men. But, in later times, attention to systematic discourse increased or diminished, as learning progressed or receded. During a still later period, when the torch of knowledge was well nigh lost sight of in the thick mists of superstition, and the shade of the surplice veiled from men's eyes the clear free light of heaven, the pulpit stood, like the temple of Belus, hid amid a vast mass of predicted ruins.

After the light of the Reformation had for some time broke in upon the earth, and the Reformers had more or less succeeded in re-rearing the church of God upon her olden primitive foundations, a renewed and larger measure of attention was directed towards preaching in its theoretic department. The treatises which were now thrown upon this field of inquiry were almost, if not altogether, suited to their own

times. A similar observation applies, of course, to the labours of Bishop Wilkins in this corner of the Master's vineyard, and perhaps a more favourable one could not be made to the wisdom and piety of our ancestors.

The standard of preaching thus continued to assume a higher position in the mind and being of the ministry of the church, till, within above a century and a-half back, the Continent of Europe presented what has been called the Augustan age of Christian preaching. It was at this period that the ministry of the French Protestant divine, M. Claude, gave additional impulse to the study of pulpit composition. His posthumous essay on this subject helped to fan the worthy flame. It is said that, in consequence, the pulpit of Britain soon after emitted livelier sparks. The sermons of the Scotch divine, Mr. Blair, which long ranked amongst the foremost in these countries, appear to have been founded upon the rules laid down by this Frenchman. Certain it is, that Mr. Simeon, of Cambridge, published *two dozen*, all but two, of large skeleton volumes, having in view the express design of establishing the Claudean system. Whatever amount of success may have attended this Herculean enterprise in after years, Mr. Simeon, as a sermonizing guide, has now almost ceased to be employed; and though the essay of his great master still exerts a directing influence, it is both limited and small.

Nor is this to be wondered at. Claude himself could not transmit to posterity his own pulpit through the press. Much less was Simeon capable of founding and perpetuating

a race of preachers, like to those who flourished in the age alluded to, from any elaborated development of Claudean principles. In both the essay of the one and the skeleton sermons of the other, the *spirit* which they sought to embody was necessarily absent. That spirit, in the Protestant Church, dwelt in Superville, Claude, and Saurin; and, in the Church of Rome, in Massillon, Bossuet, and Bourdalone. These men —one and all, together with their noble contemporaries and compeers in the ministry—laboured fearlessly and amply in the mines of Grecian and Roman literature for gems wherewith to decorate their Redeemer's brow. They listened in rapturous amazement to the mighty peals of eloquence which ever and anon came rolling upon their ears—now from the Grecian and now from the Roman—and they asked themselves, " Why may not we be in the *pulpit* what our fathers were in the senate and on the platform ?" They said, " Have not *we* the promise of the Spirit to help our infirmities when we utter the mind of God ?" They thus reasoned, and it was speedily manifested that an apostolic spirit still rested upon the church.

England—proverbially slow—presented, at this time, in her pulpits, but few specimens of that persuasive style and moving eloquence which shed a brilliancy around the continental preachers. Why she seemed so far to lag behind may be further partially accounted for owing to the peculiar circumstances of the nation, as, also, the requirements of the church. It must be allowed, moreover, that the religious tastes of the people verged strongly towards the preaching

which sways the judgment, if they did not directly turn against that which affects the heart. At all events, the driest *homilies* were in general use if not had in requisition. These were afterwards modified into the *textual* style of preaching. And we may, in charity, believe—if not safely affirm—conduced to the laying down of that solid foundation of sound theological doctrine which has rendered the ministry of the British people a praise in all the churches.

While, therefore, we cannot but express a regret that more of the continental style of preaching did not find an earlier introduction into the pulpit of these conntries, we are considerably relieved from the feeling, in that, had it been so imported, it may have lost much of that respect and effectiveness which it so amply secured for itself in the land of its birth. Native agency seems to secure a welcome not commonly extended to an immigrant ministry. Corroborative instances of this are very familiar, whilst the reasons for the fact seem both just and satisfactory.

There was, however, about the foreign mode of sermonizing an *evangelistic spirit and tendency*, suited to all classes and all climes ; and had it presented a fuller, and, perhaps, a better degree of orthodox doctrine, we might speak of it with unqualified approbation.

A similar remark, on the other hand, applies, for the most part, to the former orthodoxy of the British school, the limitation being any absence of the evangelistic element.

We hope, therefore, for a perpetuation of the older French evangelism, and the good old English theology. Their com-

bination is essential to lasting competition. Orthodoxy alone will not do. An orthodox sermon may not be an evangelical sermon ; and, wanting the latter element, it cannot be a successful sermon. To preach evangelically, and, therefore, successfully, is to preach in the purpose, spirit, and tendency of the Gospel—to be animated and guided by the one benevolent intent of restoring the wanderer and the lost to the fold of the Redeemer's mediatorship, by the Spirit's application of the Redeemer's blood.

This, and this only, appears to be the nature of evangelical discourse. Hence, though the sermons of Bishop Horsley are commonly regarded as amongst some of the loftiest monuments which have been reared to perpetuate the honour of orthodoxy, few speak of them as evangelistic expositions of Divine truth ; whereas, the discourses of Baxter, and others of his school, on any of the ordinary duties of life, are esteemed by all as pre-eminently evangelical.

We have been chiefly induced to offer the foregoing remarks from a belief of their extensive development in the ministerial life of the subject of these memoirs, and the inevitable benefits which the record of the "life and labours" of such a man is fitted to bestow upon his followers.

It is but necessary to allude here to either of these points. Our intelligent author, as far as we have been enabled to judge, has placed any additional "observations" beyond the propriety of a prefatory notice.*

* The Memoir is but imperfectly known to us from a rehearsal of the manuscript.

With a melancholy pleasure would we only remind ourselves of some of those splendid triumphs that graced the pulpits which Mr. Wilson lived, and, upon the testimony of his biographer, we may add, died also to adorn. To whatever great extent the combined forces of a personal attractiveness of manner, and a perpetual motion in the pastoral sphere, aided him in now creating and now re-creating bulky congregations from the dust and from death, there was, besides, a something in him and about him, as a public actor, without which these changes could not have been effected. That something is unquestionably to be traced to those mental endowments, and those evangelical, and catholic, and animating sentiments which, when accompanied with a personal devotedness to the cause of goodness, together with an effective elocution, are always sure to enlarge, sooner or later, the sphere of individual usefulness. Said we not well, therefore, that there is more of benefit to the minister of Christ from an attentive study of memoric writings, than from the closest application to theoretic books. In the former, we discover, for our imitation, man—in the latter, ideas only.

Designedly enclosing this paper within the limits indicated by its name, we have only to request the additional indulgence of the reader to the part undertaken by the editor. The reasons are—1. The completion of a task which others were unwilling to undertake, and some unable to execute. 2. This primary discouragement was not in any way removed, owing to the professional position of our

worthy friend. Daily occupied with the business of an extensive medical practice, he stands exempted from many of those obligations which justly lie upon every line in the publications of our city *literati*, who pass away their secluded hours, barricaded around with all sorts of human learning. 3. As is referred to elsewhere, the subject of the memoir appeared to be a still more formidable undertaking, from the qualities with which it is essentially invested. The reader will not fail to perceive that there were in Mr. Wilson's person and character attractions which it is hardly possible to consign to paper. At the same time it will be, I think, found that Doctor HASTINGS has not failed to bring out the true spirit of his subject and—what, with some is of not inferior importance—in the strict spirit of truth. He is, it is true, ever intent upon covering the grave of his spiritual benefactor with garlands of goodness, but these we have thought are not designed to convert the shroud into the purple robe of all righteousness. He enters within the house of death, but not for the purpose of turning it into a temple of perfection, where all that is bad in the human species is suddenly changed into absolute good. For ourselves, we can discover, in the spirit of grief for departed worth, even in the moments of its exaggerated distresses, no unlovely form.

With these sentiments, we now commit the present volume to the generous sympathies of a Christian ministry and a Christian people. If the friends of its lamented subject have not contributed to throw a pleasing radiance around

his tomb, Christianity has hindered them from surrounding it with gloom. Placed beyond the evil influences of all that is terrestrial, Josias Wilson lifts up his head among the celestial throng ; and the soul which, in the labouring impulses of an active spiritualism, could not find sweep enough for its capacities and desires here, is at length at rest through the satisfactions of Heaven.

CONTENTS.

Part I.

CHAPTER I.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS SETTLEMENT IN TASSAGH IN 1821, AS ASSISTANT TO THE REV. MR. HENRY.

CHAPTER II.

REMOVAL FROM TASSAGH TO DROGHEDA IN 1822.

CHAPTER III.

LABOURS IN ENGLAND, ON HIS BEGGING MISSION, IN THE YEARS 1827 AND 1828.

CHAPTER IV.

LABOURS IN DROGHEDA FROM 1828 UNTIL HIS LEAVING FOR BELFAST IN 1835.

CHAPTER V.

MANNER OF INTRODUCTION INTO BELFAST, AND HIS LABOURS THERE UNTIL HIS REMOVAL TO LONDON IN 1844.

CHAPTER VI.

LABOURS IN LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER IN THE YEAR 1844.

CHAPTER VII.

CALL TO RIVER TERRACE CHURCH, LONDON.

CHAPTER VIII.

HIS LABOURS IN LONDON UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1847.

CHAPTER IX.

HIS LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH-BED IN 1847.

CHAPTER II.

HIS WEEK-DAY MINISTRY.

CHAPTER III.

PIONEERING LABOURS.

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL VIEW OF HIS CHARACTER.

APPENDIX.



ERRATA.

PAGE 50, Seventh line, for *seen* read *been*
,, 56, *L* omitted in *Labours*.
,, 58, Nineteenth line, for *into* read *for*
,, 95, Last line, for £30,000 read £100,000
,, 159, Nineteenth line, *I* omitted.
,, 221, Twelfth line, for *is* read *his*.
,, 297, Sixth line, for *his* read *this*.
,, 307, Twentieth line, for *this* read *the*.

PART I.

CONTAINING

THE NARRATIVE PORTION OF THE MEMOIR.

MEMOIR

OF

THE REV. JOSIAS WILSON.

CHAPTER I.

FROM HIS BIRTH TO HIS SETTLEMENT AS ASSISTANT TO THE REV. MR. HENRY, OF TASSAGH, IN 1821.

AN eminent writer has remarked, and perhaps truly, that there is not any man, however confined his capacity and sphere of action, a faithful narration of whose life would not furnish lessons of useful instruction ; as, if it disclosed nothing new in human nature, it might, at least, serve to illustrate and confirm what is already known. The study of the biography of good men, and especially eminent Christians, is of all human subjects the most profitable and interesting. It may justly be compared to a mirror, wherein we see clearly reflected the representation of the person of whom we read ; and, by keeping the eye fixed upon it, we become acquainted with the different principles and emotions which actuated and governed all his actions. Nor is this its only use. It also tends to arouse within our bosoms a desire to emulate the life of him of

whom it speaks, and enables us to draw lessons of wisdom from its perusal. For instance, in reading of the philanthropist, whose object was the amelioration of suffering humanity—of a Howard or a Wilberforce—we look upon ourselves as dwarfs in comparison with these giants of general benevolence; and we feel an inward horror seize our very souls when we draw a comparison, and contemplate how much of our lives has passed away, amid golden opportunities of doing good, and yet how little of that period has been devoted to smooth the rugged path which thousands of our fellow-mortals are doomed to tread, or administer one cup of consolation to the downcast in spirit, or bestow one smile of favour, or look of sympathy, upon the forlorn, the destitute, and the oppressed.

Some men, by perusing a narrative of the all but superhuman exploits of the warrior, have felt a spirit of emulation prompting them to the performance of similar heroic actions, while others have been horrified at the recital of such sanguinary deeds.

If, therefore, the noble, godlike, and self-denying transactions of the philanthropist have such powerful influences, and cause such irresistible feelings of sympathy and general kindness to swell within our souls, and if the narration of the demon deeds of the warrior either tend to arouse within us those Cainite propensities of our nature, or soften our sensitive feelings to the resemblance of his who

said, that "to gain the whole world he would not shed *one drop of blood*," shall the perusal of the life of him whose only object was to persuade sinners "to embrace Jesus Christ as freely offered in the Gospel"—whose whole life was devoted and consecrated to the glorious work of reconciling the apostate children of Adam to their offended Father, through our great Intercessor and Redeemer, "the Lamb that was slain from the foundation of the world"—make no impression upon us? Forbid that ever our bosoms should be the receptacles of such ungenerous and callous hearts! Rather let them resemble the wax, when under the influence of heat, in readily receiving and retaining a faithful representation of the desired impression.

This much premised, we shall now proceed to the consideration of our subject, namely, the life and labours of the Rev. Josias Wilson. His father was an extensive farmer in Aughnamullen, near Ballybay, County Monaghan, Ireland. He was highly respected by all classes, and was distinguished for his piety and simplicity of character. In religious profession he was a Presbyterian, formerly in connexion with the Synod of Ulster, but latterly joined to a church of the Burgher class, on account of its being near his residence. In this church he occupied quite a leading position. He was married in the year 1772; and, as the fruits of this union, had a large family, consisting of seven sons and six daughters. He lived to the

patriarchal age of ninety-four years. His death occurred on the 22d July, 1841.

His son, Josias, was born in February, 1800, and at an early age he was set apart for the ministry. He commenced his education at a school in the neighbourhood. The teacher was a poor man and a Roman Catholic, and the instructions which he was capable of imparting appear to have been of a meagre nature. They consisted in merely giving his pupils a rudimentary knowledge of the English language. The manner in which this was accomplished was as follows :—In the academy of this modern pseudo-representative of Plato were to be found the children of Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, &c., whose parents required that their children should be taught in their respective Bibles, i. e., Protestants in their Bible, and Roman Catholics in theirs—a demand which this son of the rod readily complied with. In these days the want of good schools was much felt in Ireland by the middle and lower classes ; but of late years this has been greatly remedied, in the establishment of the National System, and even private seminaries have become prevalent, so that a youth has little difficulty now in gaining a good preparatory education previous to his commencing the studies of any of the professions. Mr. Wilson, after having spent a few of his youthful years under the care of this humble individual, and having arrived at an age which enabled him to ride and

manage a pony, was sent to Ballybay, a town two miles from his father's residence, and placed under the tuition of a young gentleman, a student who was studying for the ministry in connexion with the Covenanters. He remained with this teacher for some time, and afterwards received instructions from the Rev. Mr. Moffat, of the Irish Established Church in Monaghan.

To show that he must have been an attentive and diligent pupil, it will be sufficient to state, that, at the age of thirteen years, he had acquired all the education which was necessary for receiving his certificate from the Presbytery, and at the above age was examined by that body, and found perfectly qualified to enter college to study for the ministry.

We shall now consider the spiritual instruction which he received during this period. The wisest of men has said—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." These words were verified in the life of Mr. Wilson. He was blessed, in an eminent degree, by having a godly father and pious mother, who anxiously and solicitously watched over and prayed for their offspring. They knew that the immortal soul of man was an exotic plant, and that its present earthly soil was ill calculated to favour its heavenly growth, and that whilst here it was also exposed to the rude blasts of this chilling atmosphere, which often nip in the bud its

most beautiful shoots. Hence all their care and watchfulness over this tender plant, in order that the dews of heaven might copiously distil upon it, and render it fit for transplantation into the garden of God. As a means towards the accomplishing of this, the family altar was set up, and the sacrifices of penitent and grateful hearts were regularly placed upon it both night and morning. In picturing to our minds this beautiful scene, upon which, methinks, even angels delight to gaze, especially of a Sabbath morning, when all Nature is at rest, man, worn out by the toils and exertions of the previous week, seeks a respite from all his worldly cares—calls his family around him—and with deep solemnity reads a portion of God's holy Word, and offers up a fervent prayer to his heavenly Father that the exercises of that holy day might be blessed to them.

A friend, who had witnessed the solemnities of a Sabbath morning in Mr. Wilson's father's, thus writes:—"The good old man made a point of getting up early on Sabbath morning—devoted it to studying the Word of God—the children were then assembled around the family altar, when the sacrifice of praise and prayer were offered up to their heavenly Father." Mr. Wilson's father had his memory richly stored with Bible texts, and few had greater liberty in using them in prayer. The subject of this memoir inherited this gift from his father; and we know that many of our readers,

who were privileged to hear him from the pulpit, or in their private dwellings, will never forget the solemnity and unction with which he engaged in prayer, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

But we are not to suppose that this household worship only occurred on a Sabbath morning ; for such a specimen of godly devotion was to be seen, every morning and evening, in Mr. Thomas Wilson's house, the year round. Although family worship was thus rigidly observed, the head of the household did not rest satisfied with this only, for both he and Mrs. Wilson devoted a great portion of their leisure hours to questioning and examining the members of their family in the Shorter Catechism and Scriptures. In a family where the exercise of such piety held so conspicuous and prominent a place, we cannot but conclude that the seeds of godliness, thus early planted in the warm and youthful bosom, would eventually spring up and continue to abound. It was in such a genial and Christian soil that the subject of those memorials was brought up. Impressions were then made upon his young and vigorous mind which were never effaced by the rolling years of time. Often, both in his public and private ministry, we have heard him allude to those paternal graces with vehement emotions of filial love and remembrance. When he mentioned the care and anxiety which his mother bestowed upon him in his childish and boyish days, to fix in his mind right principles of

religion, he appeared quite in ecstacies. He would say—"The old woman would call me to her knees, and would then stroke my head and say, now, Josias, 'to be a great man you must be a *good man.*' She would then ask me to repeat the hymn which she taught me, or hear me say my Scripture lesson, or answer a question which she would ask me out of the Catechism, and if I satisfactorily accomplished my task, she would bestow upon me a look of maternal delight which amply repaid me, and to this day it vividly remains upon my mind." The following somewhat strange and remarkable incident in the life of Mr. Wilson will show that these instructions were not lost upon him, but, on the contrary, were imbibed and permanently fixed in his mind. When only in his teens he happened to attend a sermon, we believe in Newry, which was preached by an Episcopalian clergyman against the errors of Popery. A Roman Catholic stood up and opposed the arguments of the clergyman, who, being totally unprepared for this opposition, could not meet the objections which the layman advanced. At this critical juncture a lad's voice was heard, requesting permission to answer the Roman Catholic, which was cheerfully granted. The youth then stood up and completely rebutted all the arguments of his opponent—and this youth was Mr. Josias Wilson. Many of the people in the neighbourhood where this occurred remember the circumstance to this day. From this circum-

stance parents ought to take encouragement, and spare no pains in instilling into the virgin mind of their offspring the principles of the Protestant religion as taught in the Holy Scriptures, in contradistinction to the legends and dogmas of canonised mortals.

We now come to a very important period in the life of Mr. Wilson—namely, his entering college. To those only who have taken such a step can we appeal to fully understand the feelings which must have occupied his generous bosom at this period. Translated from the genial influence of maternal love, and from the paternal surveillance of a God-loving father, into a strange clime, to undergo all the monotonous drudgery of a collegiate life, and to be exposed to all its attendant and numerous evils, is a change no less great than to be feared. We are sorry that we cannot lay our hands upon any of his letters written at this period, as we are convinced that they would contain the record of many sentiments, which must then have occupied his young breast on this very subject. Lacking this information, we must at once state, that, in the session of 1814 and 1815, we find him in Glasgow College, commencing his studies for the ministry. At present there is little known of the manner in which he got through this session. It does not appear that he distinguished himself in any of the classes. He regularly attended them ; and, on the whole, was a diligent student. Both at school and

college he was a universal favourite with all his fellow-students, owing to the buoyancy of his spirits, and the loving and kind nature of his disposition. After the college session was over we find him at home, in the following summer, busily engaged in transcribing some notes which he took at college, and studying "Locke on the Conduct of the Understanding." The following session of 1815 and 1816 he entered the Royal Belfast Institution, and during this period devoted a great deal of his time and attention to the study of elocution, under the tuition of the justly celebrated James Sheridan Knowles.

In this elegant department of literature, so requisite for pulpit oratory, he attained great celebrity, and was entered as one of the competitors for the annual prize in this class. At the end of the session the competitors read and recite several pieces of prose and verse, in the Common Hall of the Institution, before a large assemblage of professors, managers, students, &c., and, at the conclusion, the prize is publicly awarded to the most efficient student. At the end of this session, Mr. Wilson was adjudged the most competent elocutionist, and received the prize, which consisted of a silver medal. We must also mention, that the Professor of Elocution, at the termination of his class, awards prizes to those students whom he considers most proficient; and here, in the same session, Mr. Wilson received the first premium,

which consisted of "Blair's Lectures," in four volumes. The following is the testimonial which he received from Mr. Knowles on this occasion :—

"Josias Wilson was publicly examined in reading and recitation, and received the first premium. His conduct throughout the session has been exemplary.

"J. S. KNOWLES."

A gentleman of Mr. Wilson's acquaintance, speaking of his appearance and manner in the Hall of the Institution on the evening of the occasion above mentioned, says, "Mr. Wilson entered into the feelings and spirit of the characters which he recited. His emotions and passions were expressed in his graceful action, and in every feature of his fair and sweet countenance. His voice thrilled through the hearts of the large and learned assembly, and many a big tear rolled down the cheeks of even the gray-headed, till, ashamed of the effect produced by the oratory of a little boy, they covered their faces, and held down their heads. No practised tragedian could have excited more intense and visible emotion under the same circumstances." In Mr. Wilson confuting the Roman Catholic, when a mere youth, we see the first proof of the inherent powers within him, and in this latter display of oratory we clearly see the germ of his future popularity budding out.

Whether it be true, or not, that Irishmen are possessed of the faculty of eloquence, in an eminent degree, we will not stop to consider. Cer-

tain, however, it is, that it is a very uncommon thing to find a youth, only fifteen years of age, as Mr. Wilson then was, able to draw tears from gray-headed men, by merely reading or reciting a piece of prose or verse, which probably had been familiar to them all their lives. We are not aware that he distinguished himself during his collegiate curriculum in any of the other classes. His essays on divinity passed without attracting much attention, or receiving much criticism. Dr. Young, Professor of Moral Philosophy, under whom Mr. Wilson studied this branch, gave him a very good certificate, as to his progress, attention, and general conduct in the class. On the whole, he appears to have been a diligent student, as all his tickets testify. In the summer vacation he was particularly assiduous, and wrote essays on different and many subjects, especially on ethics, or moral philosophy. His conduct and character in after life exhibited just an epitome of this science, as "love to God," and its natural offspring, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you," were the centres from which all his other qualities originated, and around which they radiated.

During the last year or two of his collegiate studies he began to see and *feel* the nature and deep responsibility of his calling, and it was noticed by his fellow-students that a complete change had taken place in his character and demeanour. Formerly he used to be rather thoughtless, frolic-

some, and giddy, but now these were exchanged for the steady, sober, and thoughtful student. At this time he had the pleasure and happiness to become acquainted with a Mr. M'Dougall, a student for the ministry, who was very pious, and whose conversation always bore upon the nature of the sacred office to which he aspired. This student's conduct and general deportment made a deep and abiding impression upon Mr. Wilson's mind. There is, indeed, no subject more serious, or of greater moment, for a young man to consider and examine carefully, than with whom he ought to associate or familiarise himself, on entering college, or even on stepping into life in any business. How often does it occur that young men of pious dispositions, who have received a good moral and religious education, and been trained up from childhood in the golden precepts of the Gospel under their parents' roof, on entering college, become acquainted with students of quite a different character, and, by so doing, all their former serious impressions become gradually blunted, and "those things which they counted dear unto them" are readily sacrificed for the momentary gratification of some sinful pleasure. On the other hand, we must confess that many an inconsiderate youth has been reclaimed by coming in contact with a religious and pious person ; but the exception only holds good. Sin is ever more natural and congenial to the youthful bosom than piety, and where we find

one young man possessed of moral courage to resist its enticing allurements, we find scores who are its complete devotees. The sinful propensities of youth require no great incentive to action ; they are scarcely, if ever, in a dormant state ; at all events, the least touch will arouse them—a word, a look, and lo! their evil passions are excited. Hence, parents possessed of religious children, and who have spent many anxious months and years in "training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," ought particularly to attend to the sort of associates with whom their children are likely to come into company, on leaving their homes, or on entering the world for themselves. For want of acting up to this salutary precept, thousands of young men, who promised well, and who, for a time, gave hopes that their parents' care and instructions would not be lost, have been wrecked and ruined in the giddy whirlpool of youthful follies. Mr. Wilson finished his education at college in the year 1819, and in the following year was licensed to preach the Gospel, by the Monaghan Presbytery, in Ballybay.

He very soon became popular, and had two calls given him almost simultaneously by two congregations. The first call was from the church of Tassagh, County Armagh ; the second was from Cootehill, in County of Monaghan. The Presbytery decided that Mr. Wilson should accept the former, which he did. Here he was to be as-

sistant to the Rev. Mr. Henry, whom the Presbytery had superannuated, and his salary was only £50 per annum, but, if he succeeded Mr. Henry, he was then to have the *Regium Donum,* which was £75 a-year. In the year 1821 he was ordained by the Rev. James Thompson, and settled himself in this locality, which was the first sphere of his ministerial labours, and as the stipend was considered by his father to be far too little for his son to live comfortably upon, and maintain a respectable appearance, he advised him to take a small farm, of about twenty acres, as a means of procuring him an additional income. Mr. Wilson accordingly entered upon a little farm, and commenced to labour in right good earnest, both in the vineyard of God and in tilling the soil. The latter was an occupation which he detested. He considered it totally incompatible with the Christian ministry, and entertained the idea, that

"A farming parson makes a pseudo priest."

In after-life he devoted a great deal of his attention to this subject, and did all in his power to prevent ministers having any secular employment. He even carried his opposition to this subject into the Synod, and wrote to a great number of eminent ministers, requesting them to tender him their opinion, upon clergymen being engaged in secular affairs.*

* See Appendix.

On account of his warm advocacy of this subject, he had to contend with a great deal of opposition from numbers of his brethren in the ministry; but, in endeavouring to free the ministry from all *earthly* trammels, he considered that he was only doing his duty, and, therefore, he bore all this wrath with Christian resignation, and continued to the day of his death to exemplify in his conduct what he so urgently advocated. But a question here will naturally present itself, namely, Why did he commence the world in the double capacity of minister and farmer? The answer has already been given. However, it does not appear that farming was a profitable employment to him, or that it added anything to his income, although he commenced it with his usual buoyancy of spirits and determined perseverance—quite the contrary. There was no standing still with him, and, consequently, on entering upon the farm, he directly began to remodel the cabin on the farm, with the intention of making it a comfortable cottage. He says, "I spent a great deal of money in transforming a cabin into a cottage. I had labourers employed—heavy costs and small returns. I was glad to get out of Tassagh to be rid of the farming business." As illustrative of his liberal mind, we will here relate an anecdote, which occurred during his farming days at Tassagh. Mr. Henry found him, one day, in the field busily occupied in sowing oats, and he told him that he

was scattering double the quantity of seed necessary. Mr. Wilson replied, that the promise was, that "he who sowed sparingly should also reap sparingly, and he that sowed plentifully should also reap plentifully." A friend of Mr. Wilson's makes the following remark upon this anecdote: "It is," says he, "illustrative of his spiritual husbandry, in which he sowed plentifully the seed of the Word, and, I trust, now reaps a rich reward." He only remained in Tassagh about nine months. His ministerial labours were highly valued by his hearers, and to this day several people in that locality remember his cordial visits, his unaffected conduct, and winning disposition. An old woman, still living in the neighbourhood, says, that she well recollects Mr. Wilson occasionally walking over the hill, on a cold frosty day, and coming into her house, rubbing his hands, and asking her "if she was making broth to-day?" and, after having partaken of a bowlful, directly returning home again to his studies or other employment—thus early cultivating that reciprocal relationship between pastor and people which he so highly prized, and during his life warmly practised.

The attachment of the Tassagh people to their young pastor must have been great, as we find, that after he had left them and had gone to Drogheda, numbers of them went to hear him, on a sacramental Sabbath, the distance being nearly fifty English miles!

CHAPTER II.

CALL TO DROGHEDA, AND HIS LABOURS THERE, UNTIL HIS BEGGING MISSION TO ENGLAND, IN 1827.

We now come to his removal from Tassagh to Drogheda. This latter place is a seaport, and the county town of Louth. It contains a population of 17,300, principally Roman Catholics. Here the Irish Home Mission had established a preaching station, and Mr. Wilson was appointed to preach there for four consecutive Sabbaths.—His preaching and manners, even for that short period, were so highly esteemed and so generally valued by the few among whom he laboured, that they made up their minds to give him a call to become their pastor ; and so urgent was the desire for him to come to Drogheda, that numbers who were not Presbyterians, nor in connexion with the then infant church, signed the call. The Presbytery having entertained and sanctioned it, Mr. Wilson signified his acceptance ; and, in the month of August, 1822, he left Tassagh for Drogheda. The entering upon this new field of labour was a bold undertaking on the part of Mr. Wilson, as it required a courage no less heroic than determined, to grapple with, and surmount, all the difficulties

which presented themselves to the Presbyterian cause in this Popish town. The number of those who were attached to Presbyterianism there was about *fifteen*. They had neither church nor chapel: and their place of meeting for public worship was in a private house, which they emphatically denominated the "Upper Room." The salary which they promised to give him was only £20 per annum!—and the Home Mission held out a promise of £60 additional; but no reliance whatever was to be placed upon this, as their funds were very low, owing to the great demands which were made upon them. But however chilling and unprepossessing all these, and several other circumstances, rendered the field in Drogheda, Mr. Wilson's buoyant soul floated him gallantly above them. By this time he had become sick of farming, and, in Drogheda, he saw a large population, living in a hot-bed of Popery, and steeped in ignorance, and he magnanimously resolved, in a truly apostolic spirit, to go on his Master's errand, to unfurl the blue banner of the covenant, and plant it upon these old and strong ramparts of Popery.

Here he commenced, in right good earnest, that system of pastoral visitations, which formed so important a part in his ministerial life. In every house which he entered he made it an invariable rule to pray with the family before he left. His preaching, even at this early period, was characterised for conscience-probing appeals and deep

fervour in delivery. One of his hearers, at this epoch in his life, in speaking of his first appearance and character in Drogheda, says, "the youthfulness of his appearance, the beauty of his language, and the earnestness of his manner, attracted great attention and interest, which, I think, increased each successive Sabbath. In private he left an equally favourable impression. I well remember the sensation his first prayers in the family circle caused, and some of the expressions of these prayers remain in my memory to this hour." Suffice it to say, that the Lord was pleased to bless these means greatly, and in a short time Mr. Wilson was surrounded by a large and respectable congregation.

About a year after he came to Drogheda he had occasion to visit Dublin, and was there ardently importuned to go to Scotland, on a deputation for the Tract Society. He, at first, refused, urging, in extenuation, the claims of his own infant church upon his services ; but he afterwards consented, though reluctantly. This step, thus reluctantly begun, was fraught with gracious consequences, which eternity itself will only fully unfold, as it was during this visit that he became acquainted with Miss Mary Carlile, daughter to James Carlile, Esq., of Paisley. Mr. Carlile was a merchant, highly respected for his deep integrity of conduct, sterling virtues, and exemplary life of piety, general benevolence, and catholicity of dis-

position. He was a devoted and warm friend to every society which had the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom for its aim. London Missionary Society, Baptist and Moravian Societies, received his cordial pecuniary assistance, and his house was a home to all the deputations of these various Societies when in Scotland. He was a Presbyterian, an elder, and leading man in the Middle Church, in Paisley. Twice he held the office of Provost, or chief magistrate (which ranks with our Mayor).

The deputation, in which Mr. Wilson formed a part, was remaining in Mr. Carlile's during its visit to Paisley, and in Mary, the daughter of this exemplary Christian, in the providence of God, Mr. Wilson saw the future partner of his joys and sorrows. A mutual attachment took place, and they were married on the 25th Dec., 1823. Now, Mr. Wilson was a real Irishman, in the full acceptation of the term—generous, perhaps to a fault, the exuberance of his spirits prompted him to commence several things without first duly reflecting upon them. He was, indeed, like most of the sensitive sons of Erin, the child of impulse. These qualities, however estimable, without a cautious regard to their exercise, will lead to excess ; and very seldom do we find that an individual, in whom they are largely developed, is possessed of that counteracting degree of cautiousness, so justly requisite to produce that equilibrium of thought

which is necessary in all our actions, whether spiritual or temporal. In Mrs. Wilson he found, in an eminent degree, this essential quality. A friend of Mrs. Wilson, speaking of her, says, " Mrs. Wilson was not only a religious person, but calculating, steady, and economical ; qualities in which Mr. Wilson was deficient more than any other." It was, therefore, certainly a providential arrangement, that Mr. Wilson should meet with a partner in life whose salutary admonitions would lead him, in his enthusiastic moments, to due reflection. The power that wives exercise over their husbands' actions is proverbial; and, next to the blessing of godliness, is the divine gift of a religious wife. We also see clearly manifested another gracious purpose in this union, inasmuch as Mr. Wilson had just been called to labour in a very important field, and almost immediately after he is supplied with a most suitable wife, to aid him in bearing his heavy burden, and gathering a congregation. After their marriage they sailed direct for Ireland.

We may here remark, as it will show the attachment which he possessed towards his flock, and his unwillingness to be absent from them, that during his visit to Scotland, and his getting married, he was only one Sabbath out of his own pulpit!

Mr. Wilson now commenced with renewed energy the work of the ministry, not only in Drogheda,

but, like his Master, he knew no boundaries to hedge in the message of peace and reconciliation which it was his office and delight to proclaim; and hence he went round about the villages teaching, and crying in the ears of all, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The final day of all will alone reveal the good which this really apostolic, benevolent, and Christian work accomplished. Mr. Wilson, even in his lifetime, had the pleasure of witnessing fruit from the seed thus promiscuously scattered.

The villages in the neighbourhood to which he principally itinerated, on these errands, were Navan, Collon, Queensborough, and Slane. Collon and Slane are each distant from Drogheda ten or twelve miles. In Navan, several Roman Catholics were in the habit of attending his ministry, among whom was a girl who renounced the Roman Catholic doctrine and became a Protestant. In her after-life she gave ample evidence that her conversion was real, and that she had passed from darkness to light. A few of the little band, which Mr. Wilson had succeeded in gathering around him in this place, expressed a desire for him to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to them, with which he cheerfully complied; and one who was present on this occasion, thus describes it, "I was present, and a more delightful meeting I never experienced. The number present did not exceed the number that sat down with our Saviour

in an 'upper room' in Jerusalem. The circumstances that we were placed in, as well as the ordinance itself, brought to our minds everything connected with the dying command of Jesus." This individual was brought to Drogheda, by Mr. Wilson, as a Scripture-reader among the poor.

The following letter is from a minister in the North of Ireland, who is now a most energetic and useful man. It speaks volumes.

"ROSE COTTAGE, *March 13th*, 1848.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Shortly after Mr. Wilson's settlement in Drogheda he visited the neighbouring towns, with the view of finding out the few Presbyterians that were scattered among them, that he might preach to them, and others, the Gospel of Christ. With this object, his benevolent steps were directed to Balbriggan, Collon, Slane, and Navan. With this last important inland town I am more intimately connected than with the others. As being a Scotch family, Mr. Wilson came to my father's, and soon made himself known—and known, to be most warmly received, and most affectionately loved. I can safely affirm, that no minister had ever such a hold on the affections of our family as Mr. Wilson. He preached in the Court-house, and other places, in the town. His ministrations brought crowds of Protestants, and some Roman Catholics, to hear him. His appearance, his suavity, his holy earnestness in prayer, and the Gospel which he so earnestly, so eloquently, and so powerfully proclaimed, won the hearts of all. His monthly visits became intensely interesting and eminently refreshing. To this day his memory is held in most grateful remembrance.

"It is impossible to specify all the good that may have been done through his instrumentality. Whether the impressions that were produced under his ministry, at Navan, passed away like

the morning cloud, or were deepened into genuine conviction and conversion, I cannot say.

"Having returned from Edgeworthstown school, where, in connexion with a pious family, I had received serious impressions of religion, and first felt a thirst for the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, I was occupied at home as a day tutor to several respectable families in the neighbourhood. Whilst so engaged, I felt the necessity of studying classics, which I was so foolish as to neglect when at school, and had made some progress at the time that Mr. Wilson took up Navan as a missionary station.

"I had no specific object in view, save what I was then engaged in, or obtaining a situation in some respectable mercantile establishment. Had not a kind over-ruling Providence sent Mr. Wilson my way to direct, encourage, and take me by the hand, I tremble to think what might have been the consequences. Perhaps I might have become an incumbrance to my parents, or have been sucked into the whirlpool of the world's dissipation, into which, a few years afterwards, some of my early companions were drawn, and were lost.

"I have reason to bless God while I have being, that He sent such a kind, warm friend to my aid. Mr. Wilson took me up, and made strict inquiry into my occupation, my studies, and my ulterior object. It was then that he suggested to me the ministry in the Presbyterian Church, and opened up to my view the way to its attainment.

"From that time Mr. Wilson took a double interest in my welfare. I ever found him as a father, a brother, and a friend. As often as I could I waited on his ministrations in Drogheda. His heart, his home, and his library, were ever open to me.

"Yours, obediently,

"J. Buick."

His indefatigable exertions in Drogheda, also, were abundantly blessed. The congregation increased so rapidly, that, in about three years after

his settlement there, the number of regular members entitled him to the *Regium Donum*, which he received in 1825 ; and it was then considered necessary to have a church built for their proper accommodation, as the "Upper Room" was not capable of containing the numbers that flocked to his ministry. He had only seen three years and a-half in Drogheda when this very important object was speedily commenced, and a most appropriate site was procured in Palace Street, so called from Archbishop Usher's residence being formerly here. Indeed, we believe that a part of the church stood upon what used to be the Archbishop's garden. A remarkable spirit of liberality was poured out upon the congregation, towards raising the money requisite for such an undertaking. Humble clerks were known to give as much as £30 each ! The Corporation of Drogheda, also, acted most handsomely. They gave £300 towards the building fund, as they wished the church to have a respectable front. The first stone of this building was laid on Monday, the 24th April, 1826, by the Right Worshipful William Olivar Fairtlough, Esq., Mayor. Several of the members of the Corporation, and tradesmen with their flags, attended the ceremony. The following is extracted from the *Drogheda Journal* of that date :—" On arriving at the site of the intended building, in Palace Street, his Worship proceeded to the place appointed for laying the first stone, which was surrounded by an

immense assemblage of all ranks in the town. All necessary preliminaries being arranged, the architect handed to the Rev. Josias Wilson a roll of parchment, which he read, and of which the following is a copy :—

'1826.

'The first stone of this Presbyterian church, under the Associate Presbyterian Synod of Ireland, was laid on Monday, the 24th April, in the year of our Lord God, 1826, being the seventh year of the reign of his Most Gracious Majesty George the Fourth, by William Olivar Fairtlough, Esq., then Mayor of Drogheda, attended by the Corporation.

John Chesshire, and George Henry Pentland, Esqrs, } Sheriffs.
Peter Van Homrigh, Esq., Recorder.
Rev. Josias Wilson, Minister.
Messrs. John M'Cron and Luke Shelly, Elders.

COMMITTEE.

Messrs. William Rodgers,
John M'Caul,
Andrew Lothian,
William Myles,
Joseph Sharpe,

Messrs. Peter M'Conchy,
Robt. Park,
John Adam,
Adam Langmuir,
Archibald Weir.

Mr. Austin Nicholls, Architect.'

"This roll, being sealed up in a glass bottle, was then enclosed in a cylindrical brass box, together with sundry silver and copper coins of the realm, and the last number of the *Drogheda Journal.* These being deposited in a stone prepared for the occasion, his Worship, assisted by the architect, then performed the ceremony of laying the stone, with all its usual formalities. The Rev. Josias

Wilson then addressed the Mayor in nearly the following words. After complimenting and thanking the Mayor and Corporation for the very liberal and brotherly part which they had taken in the erection of the church, he proceeded :—

"Mr. Mayor,—In erecting this church, I trust we shall be considered by none as intruders, or schismatics, or sectarians. We are all attached to our early habits, and our early principles; and it is natural that Presbyterians should wish to erect a house in which to worship the God of their fathers, in the simple way their fathers worshipped Him. But our aim is not to change their external costume. If we be proselytors, our aim is to proselyte men from darkness to light, and from the family of Satan to the family of the Redeemer. Our aim is not as schismatics, to injure any religious body in which the revealed will of God is the standard of faith and duty; but to hasten that time when names and sects and parties shall fall, and when Jesus Christ shall be all in all—when all the spiritual seed of Israel shall be collected into one fold, under Him who is the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls. If by any we should be baptized with the epithet of sectarianism, we consider it a stigma, and fling it back with indignation. I am sure I will be excused for saying, what is well known to you all, that Presbyterianism holds one of the most conspicuous niches in the Reformation. We trace it back to the day of Timothy, who was ordained 'by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.'

"In all the various walks of literature, and science, and religion, her sons have marched in the foremost order. This sacred tree of God's planting has fixed, and spread its roots deeply in the Scottish nation, and has established itself in her genial soil; its branches have spread over England and Ireland—over Holland and America—over the Indies, East and West—hundreds in distant climes are tasting of its fruits, and reposing, with pleasure, under its refreshing shade.

"The religion we shall endeavour to propagate in this intended building is the religion of the Bible, and of the Bible only. If we preach doctrine here, it shall for ever, I trust, be the doctrines contained in the Articles of the Established Church of England, as they are plainly and literally written, and were intended to be understood; and the corresponding doctrines contained in the Articles of the Confession of Faith of the Established Church of Scotland. But, although our church shall be an asylum for these doctrines of the Bible and the Cross; yet, as man is a fallen and fallible creature, God forbid that we should roll the anathema against any brother who may differ from us in some peculiarities of sentiment and worship, while he holds that Jesus is the Great God, and the only Saviour of guilty man.

"With doctrine, the necessity of duty shall be combined; and we shall impress on the mind, the necessity of 'denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, and righteously, and godly in the world; that we should do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly before our God; that we should do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.'

"If we preach politics, this shall be the nature and the extent of our system—that we should 'live in subjection to the powers that be,' believing them to be appointed by Jehovah; that we should implicitly 'render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, while we render unto God the things that are God's.' And while, in our prayers, from this altar, we present our desires for the extension of mercy to the whole human family, we shall also pray for 'kings and for all in authority, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives;' and thus, while our members are taught to 'fear God,' we shall not neglect to teach them to 'honour the king.'

"Mr. Mayor,—It is for these high and holy purposes that we intend to erect this house of prayer, to the honour of the Creator of heaven and of earth. And my earnest supplication is, that though our number here be comparatively small, we

may, under the enriching grace of God, advance with our fellow Christians in every civil and religious improvement, building our faith and hope on Him who is the great foundation-stone under His church on earth, till we are translated into that building of God, that 'house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

"This address was immediately followed by an appropriate prayer, in which the immense concourse joined with the most solemn and becoming decorum."

The building of the church was to cost £1800; and as this was a sum far too large for the congregation to contribute, notwithstanding all their noble efforts and liberality, and the munificent acts, also, of many kind friends in and around Drogheda, it was, therefore, agreed that Mr. Wilson should go to England, and there make an appeal to the friends of evangelical truth, to assist their brethren in Drogheda, who were erecting the standard of the Cross in this Popish town, which contained five Roman Catholic chapels, two nunneries, and two nunnery chapels. Now, Mr. Wilson was eminently qualified for this undertaking. His heart was in the work; and his unbounded sympathy taught him how to strike the responsive chord in the bosom of his fellow-mortals. How far he succeeded in this, his labours there will fully testify.

He started off on this mission in the beginning of the year 1827—then only 27 years old. But his years did not prevent him from fully under-

standing the science of mendicity ; for, before he grasped his staff in hand, to set out on his travels, he took care, as he himself says, "to get his case up," and have it well recommended. A good beginning is half the battle.

He received recommendations from the following ministers :—viz., Rev. Messrs. Carlile, Cooper, Stuart, sen. and jun., and Dr. Urwick, of Dublin, &c.

The following is from Lord O'Neil :—

"COLLON, *January* 10*th*, 1827.

"Rev. Josias Wilson has been a resident in Drogheda for the last five years, officiating as Presbyterian minister, and acting as such, occasionally, in this contiguous parish, where I reside, which has given me the power of stating, from *personal knowledge*, the great respect and esteem in which his character is held by all ranks and people ; and I take this opportunity of saying, that I shall always take a *great pleasure* in being of any use to him.

"O'NEIL."

"*Rev. Josias Wilson.*"

CHAPTER III.

ABOURS IN ENGLAND IN THE YEAR 1827, 1828.

ARMED as above, he bids adieu to Drogheda for a short time; and, on the 7th February, 1827, after his arrival in England, he writes home from Liverpool, as follows; and, judging from the tenor of this letter, we may conclude that no very bright prospects presented themselves to his mission. He says:—

"LIVERPOOL, RODNEY STREET, *7th February*, 1827

"MY DEAREST M——, ... Till Monday, I may say, I could do nothing in the way of begging. It is a most up-hill business. It is easy to speculate and talk about getting hundreds; but I wish some of the Committee had the practical part of the work. Dr. Stuart's congregation being building a chapel, at present, is much against me. Yet, in two or three days, I have collected nearly £30. As I do not expect much more here, at present, I intend (God willing) to be off to-morrow, or early next morning, to Manchester; and whether I am to remain there, before I proceed to London, I know not. I must be advised by Dr. Jack. On Sabbath last I preached for Dr. Raffles in the morning, and for Dr. Stuart in the afternoon and the evening; and, though Dr. Stuart's Committee will be in debt two or three thousand pounds by their building, yet they gave me a grant of five pounds, which I did not at all expect. I have no doubt that if I return to Liverpool at any time hence, much more may be collected by taking patience."

His sanguine nature was ill calculated to stand this chilling trial on his first outset; but, notwithstanding, he presently summons up courage, and exclaims—"I am determined to leave no stone unturned, and I will just leave the event to Providence." He soon left Liverpool, and we next find him in London. On arriving here, his first object was to get his case recommended by the most popular ministers of the day. He accordingly procured the following, and had it inserted in the first page of his subscription book:—

"From our deep conviction of the importance of the sacred object of the Rev. Josias Wilson, we feel authorized, most respectfully, to recommend the case to the pious and liberal friends of the Gospel and of Ireland

"Signed,

"H. Waugh,
"M. Wilks,
"W. B. Collyer,
"W. Orme,
"R. H. Shepherd,
"Jas. Gray."

The air of this "Modern Babylon," and the cordial reception by these eminent Christians, seem to have completely expelled his Liverpool hypochondriases, and he writes as follows:—

"Bow Lane, *Saturday, 3d March*, 1827.

"My dearest M——, Dr. Waugh is the most amiable old gentleman I have ever met. Last Sunday I preached for him and for Mr. Broadfoot. He told me, you know, that I could not get a collection; but, after hearing my story and sermon

his people, quite contrary to his expectation, have determined to give me a public collection before I go home. Mr. Gray is also preparing for his collection for me. Since I came here, I have only been getting ready for systematic beggarship.

"I have got 'my case' signed by many, many ministers, and well recommended; and, to forward my views, I am asked to preach for Rowland Hill and Matthew Wilks. I had the honour of speaking at the Westminster Auxiliary Bible Society; Lord Bexley in the chair. Lord Rocksavage and Lord Hardwicke also spoke—with other great personages. This happened on Tuesday last; and, on Thursday, I was asked to attend a meeting of Wolff's, for establishing schools in Persia. On both these occasions I speechified. On the latter occasion, Sir Thos. Baring, M.P., was chairman. These meetings, I trust, will be of great use to me. To-morrow I preach for Dr. Waugh, and Messrs. Gray and Broadfoot; and on next Lord's day in the Tabernacle. Though I have not set out to the begging here, more than taking preparatory steps, such as I have referred to. yet you may tell Mr. Rodgers that, altogether, I could already put in his hand nearly £200 since I came to England.

"Mr. Irving has given me an apostolic commendation of my case;* and says now it is my duty to look for the silver and the

* "To the Church and Congregation of Christian Brethren, over whom the Lord hath appointed me to labour and watch.

"Dearly beloved Brethren,—I wish you all prosperity, both spiritual and temporal, in the Lord. Our brother, Mr. Wilson, I know to be a faithful and devoted minister of the Gospel, who gives himself devotedly to preach amongst the ignorant and deluded people of Ireland, in the neighbourhood of the town of Drogheda, where he has set up his standard. I commend him to the kind and brotherly fellowship of your prayers and love: and, if Providence enables you to assist him a little, in promoting the erection of his chapel, I know it will be well bestowed and faithfully applied. Farewell, my dear brethren. May the Lord make you to abound in all good.

"EDWARD IRVING."

"*Monday, 27th Feb.*, 1827."

gold, when the deacons cannot do it. His elders are to have a meeting to-night, and they are to deliberate on giving me a collection."

About this time he was invited to dine with a friend. He says:—

"We had an awfully tremendous party of about twenty. We sat and eat like beasts for four hours, and did not separate until about one. Claret, Champagne, Burgundy, were flowing and sparkling, and were well used. Oh! I was disgusted. May the Lord forgive me, and have pity on them."

In the letter above quoted, it will be seen that Rowland Hill had asked Mr. Wilson to preach for him; and the cautiousness which the old man displayed, before admitting Mr. Wilson into his pulpit, is very commendable. We are convinced that great injury is done to the Dissenting cause in England by admitting so many young, illiterate, and inexperienced men to occasionally fill the pulpits of respectable churches. Rowland Hill was alive to this; and, therefore, he only asked Mr. Wilson to preach on a week night, giving, as his reason, "that he never wished a greater fool than himself to occupy his pulpit." A day or two after Mr. Wilson had preached in the chapel, he received the following invitation, from Rowland Hill, to preach another sermon:—

"SURREY CHAPEL, *Wednesday Morning.*

"MY DEAR SIR,—I was sorry to find that you had left this house before my return yesterday evening. The people are

very anxious to hear you again; and I believe it may prove to your advantage, in respect to your chapel-building. When I know more of you I may be able to do more for you. Will you breakfast with me to-morrow, or any other morning this week.

"Yours, affectionately,

"R. HILL."

Mr. Wilson accepted the invitation, and preached once more, on a week-day's evening.

After sermon, Mr. Hill came up to the pulpit, and, without speaking one word to Mr. Wilson, or even consulting him, gave out, "that his young brother would preach there, on next Sabbath, and give them an account of the sister isle." On this occasion Mr. Wilson put forth all his energy. He must have sympathy in his cause, and must have results; and, true to his country and the cause which he pleaded, the young orator, by his powerful eloquence, struck the electric chain of sympathy in the bosom of the venerable Rowland, and in the breasts of the mighty audience. They cordially received his message, reciprocated his wishes, and joyfully responded to his appeals.

Mr. Hill gave him two guineas, a letter of recommendation, and a list of the most liberal individuals in connexion with his chapel. The first gentleman to whom Mr. Wilson showed Mr. Hill's letter gave him £10, and another did the same, which encouraged him very much. From Noblemen, Esquires, churches, and ministers, money came in rapidly. Lord Roden gave him £25;

Sir J. Pirie, £21 ; Jas. Carlile, Esq., £10 10s. ; Lord Bexley, £10; J. B. Wilson, Esq., £20; Lord Rocksavage, £5 ; &c., &c. On the first of April he preached in Dr. Waugh's church, and received a collection of £26 9s., besides £30, which he had previously received from them privately. Mr. Gray's people would not give him a collection. They thought it better to apply for the honour of their name ; and, upon making application to one of their members, Sir John Pirie, he said—"Now, Sir, how much would you expect in the Albion ?" "I said, twenty guineas." "Well, Sir, there it is for you"—giving him a check for the amount. Suffice it to say, that altogether, in London, he managed to collect upwards of £400. He now returns to Drogheda; and, in order that the good folks there might be ready to receive both him and his bag of money, he writes as follows to Mrs. Wilson :—

"LONDON, 28*th March*, 1827.

"I hasten to communicate to you what you are to have publicly announced to my people, on Sabbath, the first of April, both morning and evening, that I shall be at home on the following Sabbath. God has indeed been good to me. I was much cast down by two or three most unchristian rebuffs, which I got from some professors ; but prosperity has, nevertheless, shone on my path ; and I do trust, that, clear of Irish and English expenses, I will be able to place in Mr. Rodgers' *five fingers* £400. Friends have been raised up, day after day, in a way I could not have expected ; and oft have I felt as if every fresh subscription, given me by godly men, laid me under increased obligations to be faithful to Christ, in the house he is

enabling me to raise. May the Lord be my helper, and may He be your comforter!"

In about three months after he returned home, he received a letter from the Rev. Dr. Waugh. The following is an extract:—

"I beg leave to convey to you the sincerest acknowledgments of my heart for your good letter to me, on your arrival at your peaceful and happy home, and the interesting contents of your good letter. My elders made me read the whole to them. It cheered and animated them. You owe to us no acknowledgments. Your personal worth, combined with your successful zeal in the cause of apostolic Christianity, deserves ten times more countenance than we gave you. Every blessing be in your cup. May the lamp ordained for God's anointed burn brighter and brighter under your administration, till it be swallowed up in the blaze of the latter day!"

Callous, indeed, must the heart of the man be, who could have remained unmoved at the contemplation of such success as that which attended Mr. Wilson on this begging excursion. He felt it strongly, and gave utterance to it; and what, perhaps, tended, more than any other thing, to excite within his soul lively and thankful emotions, was—that others had preceded him, and had not met with anything like his success. What, then, was the secret of Mr. Wilson's success? Does Dr. Waugh answer the question, when he calls it zeal? We believe he does. Zeal is a divine gift. It is the very soul of great men. Sir Isaac Newton, when asked, what it was that enabled him to make

all his discoveries? answered, that it was owing to his continually thinking upon them, and the passion which he entertained to solve every question, and surmount every difficulty which presented itself. Indeed, to it we are indebted for all our improvements in science, art, and literature. Ponder the lives of the distinguished in every age, and what are they but the records of toils, and sufferings, and sacrifices, supported under the earnest ZEAL which dwelt within the breast? And to what are the congregations of Drogheda, Belfast, River Terrace, &c., indebted for their present commodious churches, but to the burning zeal which dwelt in the bosom of Mr. Wilson, and which moved his energetic mind to prosecute, with ardour and alacrity, every object upon which he entered? And we may ask, what caused the deep lamentations after his death?—and what induces such a prevalent desire to see a memoir of his life? We answer, in the first place, it was because the spirit of zeal had escaped with the body; and, in the second place, because the belief is cherished, that, in his recorded actions, a glimpse of his APOSTOLIC ZEAL may be seen.

We may, now, naturally inquire, what were the Drogheda people doing all this time? They were not idle. They were busily employed in building up the walls of their little Zion, being greatly encouraged in their task, by the pecuniary success of their pastor in England. In 1828, the year after

Mr. Wilson's return from England, the church was opened for divine service ; but, notwithstanding all the efforts which were made to liquidate the expense of building it, they were still some hundreds of pounds behind ; and, in the same year, he again visited England, with the intention of collecting money to pay off this debt. His success this time was not so great as before ; still, on the whole, it was considerable, taking into account his former success, only a year before. On this second visit, the first place from which we have any account of him is Bristol :—

"Bristol, *10th April,* 1828.

"My dear ——, On last night I attended a missionary meeting, which was convoked by the Baptist minister, to give me an opportunity of telling all about Ireland. I gave them a long tale. . . . . . The Lord is very good to me. I preached twice on Sabbath last, and on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings—on Sabbath next twice also. To-night I am to hear the great Hall. I heard him on last Sabbath night, and was disappointed.

"J. W."

He soon left Bristol, and we next find him in Bath :—

"Bath, *17th April,* 1828.

"My dear ——, I arrived last night in this city ; and, on my arrival, I immediately called at the Post-office, but found no letter from you, and at the moment I felt a pungent sting of disappointment ; but I thought you had not time, perhaps, to have a letter forwarded. To-day, however, I got your most affectionate and comforting letter ; and, in the midst of all the

rubs, disappointments, and bustle of life, what a comfort it is to have one to care for me, to love me, and to pray for me! This feeling never came more powerfully over my mind. . . . . In Bristol, I collected very nearly £60. I did not leave it whilst I could almost get a sixpence. My subscriptions began to get so low as 2s. 6d., and then I thought it was time to decamp, and 'go to Bath.' Mr. Jay told me this morning that I cannot do much here, as he has a young man out begging for a chapel; so that among his people I cannot expect to do much. To-night I am to preach for him, and on to-morrow morning breakfast with him. He is a truly nice old man, and seems disposed to befriend me.

"J. Wilson."

In Bath he did nothing in the begging way; and we next find him in the great city again, and, by invitation, preaching in Mr. Gray's chapel, and receiving a collection from Mr. Gray's people. What it amounted to we have no means of ascertaining. However, in a few days, he managed to scrape together £24 in London; and then set off to Birmingham. Before he left London, Henry Drummond, Esq., presented a collection of works on Prophecy. We merely mention this here, as we shall have occasion to refer to it, when speaking of the schools in Drogheda.

"Birmingham, *28th April*, 1828.

"My dear M——, Yesterday I assisted Mr. James in his chapel, and on to-morrow I am to give an Irish missionary address. Mr. James has himself given me £2. He has a splendid chapel and congregation. I may say, by the way, that the Well's Street folk, in London, were grievously disappointed that I did not stay over Sabbath, and preach for them. . . .

I have got my collection now to the border of £100. Whether I may be able to raise another £100, I cannot say. I shall do all I can.

"J. Wilson."

He next writes from Sheffield :—

"Sheffield, 13*th May*, 1828.

"My dearest M——, Here the Independents and Baptists are bound up in boards, to admit certain cases. On Sabbath morning I heard Mr. Dixon, a Methodist, preaching an annual missionary sermon ; and a sweet, and liberal, and able-minded man he seems to be ; and I did very much enjoy his sermon. I am greatly among the Methodists here, by letters of introduction which I have got—and this is the Wesleyan metropolis. Yesterday, the Wesleyan Sheffield Missionary Society meeting was held—James Montgomery in the chair. I spoke at the meeting, and was present at a breakfast, in one of their chapels here, yesterday morning, at eight o'clock, where there were present about 200 persons. I have now collected about £150 ; but my expenses have to be defrayed out of it—and they will be rather heavy, as I have had such round-about travelling."

He afterwards visited Leeds, Huddersfield, Cheltenham, and Halifax ; and in them he received about £50 in all. In these two begging excursions, in England, he collected about £600—and the time occupied was about two months and a-half !

CHAPTER IV.

LABOURS IN DROGHEDA FROM 1828 UNTIL HIS LEAVING FOR BELFAST IN 1835.

Having thus brought to a close his labours in this begging mission, we shall now proceed to speak of his labours in Drogheda. Besides the in-gathering and organization of a church and congregation, there are other momentous duties which belong to the pastorate—such as the establishment and superintendence of schools, wherein the minds of the juvenile portion of the congregation may be trained up in the precepts of the Gospel, under the surveillance of their own spiritual teacher. This laudable object formed quite a distinguishing trait in the character of Mr. Wilson ; and, soon after he came to Drogheda, he established a school for this purpose, which was taught, in the first instance, by himself and Mrs. Wilson. At first the people did not appreciate its advantages; but, after seeing the great interest which both Mr. and Mrs. Wilson took in the children under their tuition, they gladly availed themselves of the privilege thus offered them, and sent their children to the school. Mrs. Wilson's labours in this school cannot be too highly

spoken of. The whole management of it, in a great measure, fell upon her, as Mr. Wilson's time was principally devoted to other objects. However, her heart was in the work; and she prosecuted it, for years, with an ardour and a zeal characteristic of a genuine Christian. A few years after the commencement of the school, the National System of Education came into operation. Mr. Wilson directly made application for a grant from the Board, and received £20 per year. This gave a fresh impulse to their exertions, enabled them to procure a teacher, and conferred upon them many other requisites necessary for a school.

Through the liberal gift of the books, above referred to, they were also enabled to commence a lending library; and Mr. Wilson, being so very anxious that the minds of the people should become enlightened, he even put in numbers of his own books into circulation. Many availed themselves of this opportunity to become wise in the things which pertain to their everlasting salvation —among whom we must not neglect to mention the Presbyterian soldiers.

Soon after he came to Drogheda, he discovered that the regiment of soldiers there stationed contained a number of Scotch Presbyterians, who, owing to the laws of the army, were not permitted to attend their own Zion. To procure for them permission to worship God, according to the dictates of their conscience, Mr. Wilson came for-

ward, and laid their case before the Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of York—although the presumption of such a step, as it was termed, gave occasion for many a hearty laugh at Mr. Wilson's expense. This, however, was speedily converted into the greatest surprise and delightful consternation, when Mr. Wilson received, from the Duke, an intimation, stating that he had given orders for a third division of Presbyterians to be made in the regiment, on a Sabbath morning, and that, agreeably to Mr. Wilson's request, they were to attend their own church !

We need scarcely say that the soldiers were greatly delighted with the successful termination of Mr. Wilson's efforts ; and that, afterwards, on a Sabbath morning, they were seen marching, two by two, with elastic step and buoyant air, Bible and Psalm-book in hand, to their own Presbyterian Church.

Both the Episcopalians and Roman Catholics received salaries, as chaplains to the soldiers, but Mr. Wilson received nothing in the shape of a salary. However, the soldiers, to show their appreciation of his disinterested conduct on their behalf, presented him with a silver sugar-bowl. The old veteran, who read the address on this occasion, trembled and shook like an aspen leaf, although he had braved the roar of the cannon and its destructive fire—had heard unmoved the agonizing shrieks of his mutilated fellow-creatures, and their dying

groans, on the bloody plains of Waterloo. Mr. Wilson used to laugh heartily when telling this tale about the old soldier's trepidation.

In the year 1829, he called the attention of both the Secession and Ulster Synods to the subject of military chaplaincy ; and, through his exertions, a deputation was appointed to wait upon the Lord Lieutenant, to represent to his Excellency the hardship of Presbyterian ministers not being allowed anything by Government for their services to Presbyterian soldiers. What success the deputation had we cannot say. However, of late years, the Government has granted a salary to Presbyterian chaplains. It was when Mr. Wilson was in Drogheda that the Rev. Dr. Edgar, of Belfast, justly styled the "Father of Temperance in the North," commenced agitating this cause. At first, Mr. Wilson could not make up his mind to join it. But, just about this time, a very lamentable case of the evils of inebriety came under his notice. One of his hearers, a Scotchman, who worked at a distillery, and received good wages, which enabled him and his family to live in comfort, unfortunately took to drinking ; his wife, also, soon followed his example. This, in a short time, reduced them to a miserable condition, both in mind and worldly comforts. They pawned, or otherwise disposed of, all their clothes and furniture, to procure that destructive element, ardent spirits ; and, at last, they were reduced to a complete state of beg-

gary. By-and-by the wife died and was buried; and, shortly afterwards, the husband was seized with *delirium tremens*—that awful sequel to a life of intemperance—under which his vital powers sank; and, in this melancholy state, he breathed his last. His wife's corpse was removed from the grave to allow his to be put under, and so fragile was the coffin which contained the body, that it gave way. It was then sewn in a sack, and, in this unchristian state, again committed to the grave! Mr. Wilson did all he possibly could to wean this unhappy pair from drinking. He regularly and zealously visited them—reasoned and prayed with them; but to no purpose. This lamentable scene, from first to last, made such a deep impression upon his mind, that he resolved, in the strength of the Lord, never to taste whisky, or spirits of any description—a resolution which he was enabled to carry out until the day of his death. He afterwards became, and continued to be, a warm champion of temperance; and this will appear the more commendable and heroic, when we take into consideration the fact, that the principal members of his church were large distillers. They, however, to their praise be it spoken, gave him credit for his hearty espousal of the cause, as they believed that it only proceeded from his anxiety both for their spiritual and temporal welfare; and, notwithstanding his constant exposure of the entailed and numerous evils, both in public and

private, attendant upon a life of intemperance, not one of them left the church. Indeed, a faithful exposure of moral evils will seldom contract the wrath of man; but the empty flourishes of insincere professors will be seen through, and looked upon as tinkling brass and sounding cymbal—devoid of that spirit which speaks to the heart of man, in strains at once sweet and impressive. Joseph's faithfulness was appreciated by Pharoah, while the assumed sanctity of Potiphar's wife met with that condign punishment which it richly deserved.

In the year 1828, we believe principally through Mr. Wilson's exertions, a Reformation Society was formed in Drogheda. The Roman Catholics were very much displeased at this; and, on the evenings of the Society's meetings, they would come and disturb and oppose them. This gave origin to another great public discussion between the Protestants and Roman Catholics, on the 3d, 4th, and 6th of Feb., 1828. On the Protestant side, were Rev. Thos. T. Dunleer, Rev Ed. Hardman, Rev. Wm. Dalton, Rev. Josias Wilson, Captains Gordon and Vernon, Rev. Mr. Reilly, and Rev. Chas. Mayne. On the Roman Catholic side, were Messrs. O. Donegan, Gray, Bellew, and Darcy.—John M'Clintock, Esq., and Henry Smith, Esq., chairmen. We may just say that this discussion, like all others of a similar nature, ended in each party believing themselves to be the con-

-ators, and the bearers of fresh laurels to their cause.

We will here introduce two extracts from the speech of Mr. Wilson. The first is repudiating the Roman Catholic idea of the "lewdness of the Bible." The second is rebutting the opinion that the Protestants are obliged to the Roman Catholics for the preservation of the Bible :—

"'I now advert to his ideas about the 'lewdness of the Bible.' Many passages were so lewd in it, he has said, that he 'would not make the ladies pull down their veils by reading them in their hearing; and, consequently, it cannot be the sole rule of faith, nor in itself a fit book for the laity.' It was the first time I ever heard such an idea advanced by any man calling himself a Christian. It came upon me like a thunder-clap, and I could not help looking up to Jesus at the moment, and asking, 'Must Thy church be defended with such foul aspersions on Thy Holy Word ?'

"My opponent, probably, knows something of natural history. He knows that a wasp and a bee draw into themselves a very different substance from the very same flower. What the bee draws from the flower is converted into honey—what the wasp draws from it is converted into poison. If the Bible be the Book of God, it is the most beautiful flower that opens under the rays of the Sun of Righteousness. He who reads it with a prayerful mind will find it, as David (Psalm xix. 10)—'Sweeter than the honey' to his soul ; but he who reads it in the waspish spirit, with which Mr. D. appears to have perused it, must draw from it the 'savour of death unto death.' But, by following out the comparison, the poison, the lewdness, are not to be found in the Bible, but in the reader's carnal mind and unholy heart. If his conscience be not stung by this allusion, let me remind him of the sacred words—'To the pure all

things are pure;' or of the motto on our Royal garter—'*Honi soit qui mal y pense*'—'Evil to him that evil thinks.'

"I know, indeed, that the Spirit of God has recorded that Lot was chargeable with the crime of drunkenness, and, in consequence, of incest with his own daughters. But who will be blasphemous enough to say it was written with a lewd tendency? It is branded, on the very face of the Scriptures, with the frown of God, and to horrify every man with the transgression who would read the history. It is frequently asserted, that the curse of the Lord rested on the Moabites and Amorites, the offspring of the criminality. It shows the honesty of the sacred historian, in relating crimes of his own brother, and is a grand proof of the inspiration of the Scriptures. It is raised up on the page of revelation as one of the most frightful consequences of drunkenness. It is one of the greatest safeguards of purity and virtue, and is an overwhelming argument against him who has dared to vilify the Bible, that it is a perfect standard of the most heavenly faith and of the purest morality.

"And with what grace does this argument, about the lewd tendency of the Bible, come from men in whose houses you may get the most wanton novel that can pollute the human mind, and in whose shops you can buy the vilest ballad that pollutes our streets? Yet these men talk, forsooth, about the lewdness of the Holy Scriptures! Why are not the novels and the ballads sent forth with notes and annotations? Why are not they restricted in their circulation like the Bible? Because there is no danger from them to the Church of Rome—Romanism can flourish and luxuriate in their society! If it were not so, could not the priests, who can chain you like slaves when the Bible is in question, prevent the circulation of these abominable ballads, if they pleased? Could they not prevent you buying the one as well as buying the other? But this I declare, as my solemn conviction, that the Bible, if you read it prayerfully, as God has given it to man, would soon thin the ranks of Romanism. But the abominably lewd bal-

lads are anything but enemies to Popery; and, therefore, they are sung without restriction at your very chapel doors, and most freely circulated without a single annotation.

"But Romanists will, perhaps, exclaim, 'Why scandalize our infallible Church in this way? for are not you, Protestants, obligated to us for the Bible, and did not our Church preserve it for ages before you were ever heard of?' Yes, she preserved it; and with a vengeance, too. She preserved it by cutting off its hands, and tearing out its tongue, that it might not be able to defend the truth of our Redeemer. She preserved it, as a jailer does his prisoner, by driving him to a dungeon, and fettering his hands and feet, to deprive him of light and liberty. She imprisoned it for seven hundred years, till Wickliffe sprung into the loathsome cell of its confinement, and loosed the bandage from its eyes, and dashed the chains from its arms, and robed it in beauteous English clothing, and it breathed the air of liberty in our land.

"Your Church preserved the Bible for centuries! Yes, as the grave preserved, for three days, the body of our Saviour; but the heralds of light rolled away the stone from its sepulchre, and it came forth incorruptible, like its Author, for iniquity it never had committed; and it burst upon the world with renewed glory; and, having passed its years of humiliation, it is now exalted above all its enemies, and will pour a flood of light over all the nations of the world. But, though Jesus is exalted above all the cruelty of man, there are still many that revile His name; and, though His Word has escaped from its confinement, there are still many to proclaim it as an enemy, and 'hunt it like the partridge on the mountains.'

"I need not tell you of the decrees that were made to prohibit the reading of the translated Bible, under pain of eternal damnation. All who dared to read it were then treated, in these lands, like criminals guilty of treason against God and man.

"In the beginning of the sixteenth century, one copy of the Scriptures (says an elegant biographer) supplied many families

amid the bleak hills of Scotland—'And at the dead hour of the night, when all others were asleep, they assembled in one house; the Sacred Volume was stolen from its concealment; and while one read, the rest listened with mute and fearful attention.' It was death, at that time, to be found in possession of a Bible—it was death to be guilty of its perusal. Need I tell you that hundreds of Bibles were collected at that time, and burned at St. Paul's Cross, in London, and that William Tindal was a martyr, near Brussels, for the crime of their translation? Now that the mild and liberal genius of the Reformation has spread its influence over the civilised world, there is little direct persecution for conscience' sake.

"There are no groups of heretics burnt at the stake, with Bibles strung about their necks, solely for clinging to the oracle of Heaven as the only rule of faith; but still Romanism, hoary and infirm though it be, and bending o'er its grave, stretches out its trembling hand to stop the progress of the Book of Life!"

Notwithstanding all Mr. Wilson's assaults upon the creed of the Roman Catholics, he never for one moment entertained the least animosity towards their persons. Creeds and measures concocted by designing man, contrary to the canon of Scripture, were what he waged fierce war against: the persons of men were as sacred to him as the apple of his eye. He zealously laboured, by that powerful instrument, reason, to convert his erring Roman Catholic brethren. Indeed, it was just his zeal, and his genuine philanthropy, which prompted him to throw his whole heart and soul into this discussion. The souls of all men were the jewels which he ardently wished and laboured to refine, and

impress with the precepts of the Gospel. And we have reason to believe that, in the great day, many of the once deluded victims of Rome, who were reclaimed, by his soul-piercing ministry, will shine as gems in the crown of Immanuel. In the early part of his life, he was rather deeply tinctured with prejudice ; but what tended to remove this, perhaps, more than anything, was, that his church, in Drogheda, contained as members those who had formerly been Roman Catholics, Baptists, Cameronians, Episcopalians, and Independents. He saw, in his congregation, that although a man had his soul encased in a Baptist, Episcopalian, or Roman Catholic tabernacle, that did not prevent him from coming to draw waters out of the well of salvation, nor to hear the message of God proclaimed, even by a Presbyterian ; and believing that the Lord is nigh unto all those who call upon Him in sincerity, and that He excepteth not the person of any man, gave his cordial assent to those soul-renewed breathings of the immortal Watts—

"Let sects, and creeds, and parties fall,
And Jesus Christ be all in all."

The hair-splitting theological and subscription barriers, which had separated the Secession and Ulster Synod, began to appear of too pigmy a nature to hedge in his general views of usefulness, and he now commenced to effect, if possible, a

union between these two bodies, believing that "in union there is strength." We believe that he was the first to advocate this, which was effected in the year 1840; and the two Synods, thus united, are styled "The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland." At all events, he was the first Seceding minister who joined the Synod of Ulster —thus practically illustrating what he advocated.

He had now laboured diligently and zealously, in Drogheda, for about thirteen years, and had been the instrument, in the hand of Providence, of collecting a tolerable congregation, building a commodious and respectable church and manse, and organizing both a day and Sabbath school. In all these laudable undertakings he was very much encouraged and assisted by Mr. Rodgers, of Drogheda, especially in the building of the church; and we think it only right that his name should be placed side by side with Mr. Wilson's, in his church-building efforts.

Having thus planted a banner of the Cross in this Popish town, he was called upon, by the "Head of the Church," to use the "hammer of the Word" in a perfectly new and unoccupied locality; and it certainly gives us great pleasure to be able to say, and it is only justice to his memory to do so, that he left the church and school free from debt.

Perseverance and zeal will overcome all difficulties. The pyramids of Egypt echo this—the good and great, and the distinguished benefactors

of mankind, respond—"Yes, we know it;" but the Turk, the idle, and the negligent, smoke their pipes and rub their eyes, and listlessly say—"Ah! we don't believe it!" "Allah is great!" "Allah is good!" and, during the time they thus squander, Josias Wilson has a church built. We must not omit to mention that, in the year 1832, ten years after he came to Drogheda, he was ardently solicited to become the pastor of a new congregation in Cork; but this he declined, for reasons of which we are not aware.

CHAPTER V.

MANNER OF INTRODUCTION INTO BELFAST, AND HIS LABOURS THERE, UNTIL HIS REMOVAL TO LONDON, IN 1844.

In introducing our readers to his next sphere of labour, it will be necessary for us to preface it by stating, that the Rev. Dr. Morgan, in the years 1834 and '35, was making great exertions for having a church erected in a much-neglected, but rapidly-improving, district in Belfast. This district lay in the suburbs of the town, where great numbers of mechanics, and people who worked in the various mills in the neighbourhood, resided; and here Dr. Morgan had succeeded in having a church erected for their accommodation. The next step was to procure a suitable minister; and the Doctor believed that Mr. Wilson was just the man to gather in the people from these outskirts. It so happened that, precisely at this time, the period for celebrating the Lord's Supper was at hand in the Doctor's church. He therefore wrote, merely requesting Mr. Wilson to assist him on this occasion; and, after considerable hesitation, owing to the great distance between his residence and Belfast, Mr. Wilson complied with the Doctor's re-

quest. Now, it also so happened that, on this Sabbath, there was no minister procured to supply the pulpit of this new church in Townsend Street, and the Doctor requested Mr. Wilson to preach there—which he did. The people who attended were so much pleased with him, and his animating style of preaching, that they requested him to preach for them again, on the following Tuesday; but he could not do this, as he had made arrangements to return home on that day. However, he preached in the church on the following Monday, and the members of the church, then and there, determined to give him a call to become their minister. The next day, Tuesday, he returned to Drogheda; and, very shortly afterwards, in November, 1835, he received a call from the Townsend Street people, to become their pastor. The following is a copy of it :—

"TO THE REVEREND JOSIAS WILSON.

"We, the members of the Presbyterian church of Townsend Street, having heard a good report* of you, and being fully satisfied of your capacity to be our teacher in the Lord, do hereby call and entreat you to take upon you the work of the ministry among us ; and we promise attention to your instructions in the Gospel, respect to your person for your work's sake, and submission to the discipline of the Presbyterian Church, in connexion with the Synod of Ulster, according to the laws of the Lord Jesus Christ."

This call was signed by 124 of the most respectable individuals belonging to the church. The stipend which they promised him was £150 per

annum—*i.e.*, if the church could raise it; consequently, here, as in Drogheda, his income was to depend altogether upon his own exertions. Some members, in the Belfast Presbytery, gave considerable opposition to the call being moderated; but, on perceiving that the people of Townsend Street church were bent upon having Mr. Wilson, they withdrew their opposition, and the call was moderated on the 9th Nov., 1835.

The ground upon which the opposing party based their opposition to Mr. Wilson was, that he was a supporter of the National Board of Education. Most of our readers, no doubt, will recollect that the Synod of Ulster was very much opposed to the plans of the Board, and would not have anything to do with it, for some years after its formation. But, if it was not everything which a "true blue" Presbyterian could desire, we are inclined to believe that there are many extenuating circumstances which ought to be taken into consideration, before that we pronounce Mr. Wilson guilty of the least violation of any moral or religious principle in his union with the Board. We would only ask his opponents to take into their serious consideration the *peculiar position* in which he was placed when the Board came into operation. Let them only fancy themselves located in a strange place, making an effort to collect a congregation, battling against the errors of Popery on the one hand, and receiving sullen op-

position on the other. The minister's wife, spending her strength, day after day, for nought, and even the minister himself giving up all his spare hours to teaching children gratuitously, having scarcely any funds to procure the necessary apparatus for a school, and receiving the scoffs of their rivals at their poverty and drudgery. Fancy all this, and we would say, believe it too ; and if you can, in honesty of conscience, accept the provisions of the Board, then we say that, if the education of the young and rising generation is desirable to make them good citizens, and if it occupies as prominent a place in your regard as it most undoubtedly did in Mr. Wilson's, we are inclined to believe, that you would look upon the facilities which the Board offered, as assisting you in your praiseworthy exertions, more in the light of a blessing than a curse.

Such was something like Mr. Wilson's position when the National System was established ; and he could not see that there was anything in its requirements to which he could not subscribe with a good conscience ; and, as before stated, he made application to the Board, and placed his school under it. The grant which he received from it, although small, was of great use to him in his present position, as it enabled him to procure a teacher, and all the other *et ceteras* necessary for conferring a good English education ; and, from hence, the school continued to flourish, and rival

other schools, and proved a positive blessing to many parents and children. Nor do we find that ever he had occasion to repent of his union with the Board—quite the contrary. He continued a warm advocate of it as long as he lived, and used his pen, with a vigour and ability, on its behalf, which often silenced its opponents. It is a fact that, notwithstanding all the opposition which the Synod of Ulster gave to the education scheme, on its commencement, the Presbyterian Church has, of late, after receiving some concessions from the Board, given in its adhesion to the System, and great numbers of its schools are now under its control.

It is certainly somewhat strange, and forms quite an epoch in Mr. Wilson's life, that he should be the first to leap over the barriers between the Secession and Ulster Synods ; and that, in a short time after, these barriers should be removed by a cordial union of the *two* Synods. He was likewise among the first to accept of the National Education plans ; and in this also, he was, in a few years, followed by hundreds of his brethren in the ministry. It thus appears that Nature intended him to be a leader in such movements, and a demolisher of intruding barricades. Indeed, we believe that, for this purpose, she endowed him with an uncommon degree of quickness, penetration, and perseverance, which made him see the real nature of a thing in an instant ; and, while

others were reposing on their arms, and reconnoitring the position of the enemy, and deliberating as to the most likely results of coming into action with them, Mr. Wilson was already in close quarters, carrying all before him, and master of the field—the expansive energy of his ardent spirit bearing him buoyantly over all difficulties.

When he received the call from the Townsend Street congregation, Mrs. Wilson was in Paisley, attending upon the last moments of her father. Mr. Wilson writes to her, on the subject of this call, as follows:—"My mind is much agitated about Belfast, and I want you home, in the course of this week, to have your counsel in this important matter. It is most necessary you should be home on Friday or Saturday." In reply, Mrs. Wilson says:—"Your way seems to be clear. You cannot, I think, draw back now; nor do I believe it would be at all your duty. I am more and more convinced that it is all the work of Providence. We must, therefore, just make up our minds to suffer a great deal in parting with our dear friends in Drogheda; but we must not be distressing ourselves about it until the time comes. In the meantime, let us be diligent in the work which we have to do." Mark what follows:— . . . . "My chief anxiety is about whom they may get in Drogheda."

Mrs. Wilson informed her father, who was then on his death-bed, that her husband had received a

call to a new church, in Belfast, and that his mind was very much perplexed and unsettled, as to whether he ought to accept it. The old patriarch's departing spirit then said :—" Tell Mr. Wilson, that his father-in-law said, on his death-bed, that he ought to go to Belfast ;" and, in a short time after giving utterance to these decisive words, he was gathered to his fathers. We call them decisive words, because these dying accents of this venerable saint settled the question with Mr. Wilson ; and he consequently determined, in the strength of the Lord, to obey the dying words of his father-in-law, for whom he cherished the most profound reverence. The congregation of Drogheda felt much the loss of their esteemed and devoted pastor, and when it was told them that he was about to leave, it perfectly paralysed their spirits, and, for a time, "they refused to be comforted." But the pain experienced was felt, not only by them; for all classes of society, high and low, and all sects and denominations—the Roman Catholics, the Episcopalians, &c.—could not refrain from expressing their deep regret at his departure. They felt, and justly too, that one who had a profound regard for their eternal salvation was about to bid them an adieu ; and many of them came to express their sorrow, and entreat an interest "in the good man's prayers." How delightful must such an expression of gratitude have been to the tender and exquisitely sensitive heart of Mr. Wil-

son! and how must it have nerved him to prosecute, in after-life, with zealous fidelity, that good work of reprobating error, and preaching Christ and Him crucified, which had merited, even from his opponents, this genuine testimony of his faithfulness in things pertaining to godliness!

The hour was now fast approaching which was to rend asunder those endearing ties which cement a godly pastor and loving people in the bonds of Christian fellowship. This eventful day came; and, on the 27th January, 1836, Mr. Wilson bade farewell to Drogheda, with his heart bowed down and full of sorrow, amid tears of regret, and sighs of many sorrowful bosoms, and moved on his way to Belfast, carrying with him hearty expressions of kindness from his friends, and many prayers for his continued usefulness; and, in a short time, arrived there, where so many were on tiptoe to receive him.

On his settlement in Belfast, the first object which occupied his attention was to procure a residence near to the church. The locality in which the church was built, as before mentioned, was poor and lowly situated, and Mr. Wilson's friends, consequently, advised him to take a house in a more healthy and respectable place; but he would not listen to a word of this advice, as he believed that the church ought always to be about the centre of the congregational district, and that a minis-

ter s usefulness greatly depended upon his living beside his church.

Among the many traits in his useful life, worthy of being handed down to other generations, we consider that this is not the least memorable, as it at once exhibits his attachment to his flock, his desire to be useful among them, and his idea of the indissoluble connexion which ought to exist between pastor and people. Would to God that we could say this much of all those who take upon them "the office of a bishop," and swear that they are "inwardly moved" to this duty! Mr. Wilson carefully guarded against being far removed from his people; the responsibility of the ministry was, in his opinion, of too serious a nature to permit of any voluntary separation between him and his flock. He considered that the short period of man's existence here below was far too transitory for performing all the duties which this union devolved upon him; and, therefore, he could not brook the idea of squandering away his life in frivolities or vain amusements, leaving the flock exposed to ravenous wolves. No! His desire was to live in the midst of his people—to counsel, guide, and direct them.

Not being able to procure a residence contiguous to the church, he took lodgings in its vicinity, until a suitable house and position could be obtained for him. This desideratum, however, was

speedily effected, as a neat and very respectable manse was erected for him, adjoining the church; and, in nine months after his coming to Belfast, in November, 1836, he removed into it; and here he resided, until it again pleased God to remove him to another portion of His vineyard. Here, instead of having a congregation to gather out of all sects and denominations, and a church to build for their accommodation, he found himself in the very focus of Presbyterianism, and a church built and ready for him to fill. To accomplish this he commenced, as elsewhere, visiting from house to house.

In connexion with this visitation, the following incident occurred:—It is an old Presbyterian custom for one of the elders to accompany the minister. However ancient, and, perhaps, laudable, this plan may be, it is certain that Mr. Wilson's idea of economy and labour would not allow him to subscribe to it. He could not bear the idea of two men only doing the work of one. Hence, he said to the old elder who wished to accompany him, "No, no. I have no objection to your visiting the people; but I cannot see the use of our going together to the same place. You can go one way and I can go the other; and, rest assured, there is scope and work for us both." When in Drogheda, he used to preach in the church on a week evening; but here he gave this up, assigning as his reason, that the people who came out to a week evening's lecture or sermon were those only who

were privileged to hear the Gospel every Sabbath; and he was, therefore, determined to substitute preaching, during the week, in districts where the people scarcely ever came out to church. He, accordingly, went to the school-houses in connexion with the large manufacturing mills in the neighbourhood, and preached, three or four times a-week, to crowded congregations. In about two years after he came to Belfast, Mr. Martin, the minister who succeeded him in Drogheda, died; and, on this event reaching Mr. Wilson's ears, he writes the following letter to Mr. Rodgers, one of the committee in Drogheda church:—

"BELFAST, *14th Feb.*, 1838.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I feel much that I have to take up my pen to write to you, in consequence of the melancholy event which has taken place amongst you, by the death of the excellent and faithful man whom the Lord has taken to himself. When I first heard that Mr. Martin had taken fever, I acknowledge that I was very much afraid of the result. . . . . You will give me credit when I say that I am most anxious about the congregation in its present state. It is a very critical time with any people when they are in a state of vacancy. Many an eye will be turned towards your next settlement. O that it may call forth the united and earnest prayers of the whole flock! When I heard of poor Mr. Martin's death, I immediately went to Dr. Edgar, to speak to him with regard to your case, and about the character and qualifications of a successor to my departed friend.

"Permit me briefly to state to you what I think is the plain path of duty for the congregation. You should not, if possible, allow the Presbytery to send you the general run of proba-

tioners. You well remember what effect this line of procedure produced several years ago. The same cause would now produce the same effect. You should endeavour, as we did two years ago, to get a few select men to preach as candidates—and to get them without the least delay ; and, amongst these, make choice of one to labour amongst you in the Lord. Delay, in your case, is especially dangerous, and might be destructive to your prosperity and peace. If you delay long, you might fall into parties—though I trust in God that you have not the elements of division and discord amongst you, but that, as in Mr. Martin's case, your choice will be harmonious, and as suitable now as it was then. O that the Great Head of Zion may pour out on you all the spirit of wisdom in this all-important affair !—that He may guide you to a pastor who will, at once, be faithful and affectionate, laborious, zealous, persevering, and successful, in his ministerial career !

"My anxiety concerning you is great. May I beg to hear from you, or some of the leading members of the committee, from time to time? If I can be of any use to you, command my services, when and how you please. I might be able to give you information, which you could not, perhaps, elsewhere obtain, with regard to candidates, &c., as they are all educated, and, consequently, known here.

"I am aware you had my brother-in-law on last Lord's-day. He wrote to me, on Friday, to go up in his stead ; but, though it would have been deeply interesting to me to have done so, I could not possibly get off, in consequence of two prior and public engagements. That the Lord may speedily lead you, and all my beloved friends in the congregation, to a pastor after His own heart—one who will be the means of adding many, many, to the Church, of such as shall be saved—is the earnest wish of

"Your affectionate friend,

"JOSIAS WILSON.

"P.S.—I have charge, I suppose, of not fewer than 3,600 souls.—J. W."

We beg leave to particularly call the attention of the reader to the last sentence in this letter—viz., "I have charge, I suppose, of not fewer than 3,600 souls," as it proves that, during the two years which he had now been in Belfast, he had not been idle in the work of ingathering a congregation, and shows the astonishing success which attended his labours in this district. The original church was now far too small to accommodate the numbers that came to his ministry, and an enlargement was proposed and speedily carried into operation. This, of course, entailed upon Mr. Wilson additional labours, which proved to be more than his strength could bear, and he was seized with a violent attack of hæmatemesis, or vomiting of blood, which proved very obstinate, and seemed for a time to mock all medicine, so that his life was considered to be in imminent danger. However, it pleased the Lord to bless the means used for his recovery, as He had other duties for him to perform; and, after some considerable time, he was enabled to resume his usual duties. Soon after his recovery, he made the following covenant with his God:—

"PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TOWNSEND STREET,
BELFAST, *3d September*, 1839.

"A FORM OF COVENANT WITH GOD.

"In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I do hereby, in the most solemn and deliberate manner, as I shall answer at the bar of the Great Judge, covenant and pro-

mise that I shall, by God's grace, cast aside every weight, and the sin that most easily besets me, and that I shall run, with patience and prayerful dependence on the Spirit, the race of duty or of trial which God may appoint for me, that I shall, at home and abroad, in public and private, deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly in the world; cultivate all holy graces in my own soul, and be more anxious for the conversion of my dear flock than I have yet been. All this I am led, I trust by the Spirit, to resolve and covenant, at the present time, in consequence of a severe illness with which the Lord has wisely and mercifully visited me, on account of my many imperfections and sins.

"JOSIAS WILSON."

He writes to a friend, soon after his illness, as follows :—

"BELFAST, *30th September*, 1839.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You will be glad to hear that my health is improving. I have nearly done with the doctors, and have got, as they say, into the hands of the cook. The mercy of my God in the affliction was very conspicuous. It was severe for a time, and once or twice excited in my mind strong apprehensions as to the result; but while under it, and now when in a state of convalescence, I do say, with all my heart, 'it is well.' It has afforded me a very precious opportunity of reflecting on my own personal state, and on my ministerial progress; and I have found much to learn, much to consider, and very much that requires decided change and improvement. I trust the Spirit is not altogether absent. Pray for me, that to myself and my congregation the visitation may be greatly blessed. During my illness, my mind became much engrossed with the subject of *religious revivals*, and the three discourses I have preached on the last three Sabbath mornings have been on that subject :—1. What is a religious revival, that it may be Scripturally expected? 2. Need of a revival. 3. (On yesterday)—The means of promoting a re-

ligious revival. Since I have commenced this series of discourses, there is a great anxiety to hear displayed by the people, and much increased solemnity in hearing. Our communion will be held on next Lord's day, and I look forward to it with much interest. We are refreshed and rejoiced by the glad tidings you have sent us from Scotland as to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in Kilsyth, Dundee, and other places. May it continue—may it increase and abound.

"JOSIAS WILSON."

Truly, afflictions have been the school of wisdom in all ages of the world, and many of God's saints have found His correcting rod precious to their souls. David says, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word."

It is our decided opinion that the disease under which Mr. Wilson laboured was brought on by continual excitement of the mind, and great bodily labour, which proved to be more than his physical powers were capable of sustaining, and that these engendered a diseased organization in the system which laid the seeds for the ultimate cause of his death. When he was reasoned with on the superhuman nature of his labours, he would reply, using a favourite saying of Rowland Hill, that "it is better to wear out than to rust out." However much we may admire his apostolic devotedness, we must, at the same time, lament that it should, most likely, have proved the cause of his death at an early date.

Immediately after his restoration to health, he resumed his duties with his wonted fervour, and, in

a short time, had again filled the church, after its enlargement. Here, as in Drogheda, the education of the young received his zealous attention, and in connexion with the church he had got together a large school. He believed that the proper time to train the mental faculties was just when they were beginning to bud out. Impressions then made are very apt to remain. As one of our poets has said—

"The child's the father of the man."

Or, as Cowper says, in his "Tirocinium":—

"That we are bound to cast the minds of youth
Betimes into the mould of heavenly truth,
That, taught of God, they may, indeed, be wise,
Nor, ignorantly wandering, miss the skies.
In early days the conscience has in most
A quickness which in later life is lost;
Preserved from guilt by salutary fears,
Or, guilty, soon relenting into tears."

It is a most lamentable fact that, according to Mr. Rawson's reports, out of 121,083 marriages which occurred in 1839, there were 40,587 men who could not sign their names, and 58,957 women who could only make a mark; and it is also most startling to think that, notwithstanding all the boasted noble and venerable institutions of England, she stands lower in the scale of education than either Ireland or Scotland, as only one-tenth of her population receive an education. England only spends £30,000 annually from the

public purse on education, and her criminal prosecutions cost her £400,000 annually! As the results of this ignorance, let us look at our criminal courts, and they will "unfold a tale" enough to "harrow up" our very souls. The number of criminal prosecutions in 1830 in England was 18,657; but in ten years after they had increased to the awfully vast number of 27,187!—very nearly double the number; and, besides these, there are annual summary convictions before magistrates to the all but incredible number of 50,000! The following statistics, from the London Society, will amply prove that crime and ignorance are twin sisters. Of every 100 offenders in England and Wales, thirty-five per cent. could neither read nor write; fifty-four per cent. could read and write very imperfectly; ten per cent. could read and write *well;* and ONLY FOUR PER CENT. had received a *good* education; and it is also stated that about twenty-five per cent. of these prosecutions occurred at ages varying from fifteen to twenty-five years, just when they ought to have been taking their position in society as sober, quiet, and intelligent members. However heart-sickening on the whole these statistics are, it is very pleasing to observe how rapidly the criminal thermometer sinks, as learning bears upon it. Surely, all friends of religion and social order ought to make an effort to wipe out this foul stain from the pages of our national history. Had ministers, and laymen too,

more of Mr. Wilson's spirit on this subject, the heaving billows of ignorance and criminality which are now shaking society to its very foundation would soon assume a more cheering aspect. But figures speak a simple and intelligent language. Mr. Wilson's school had generally from four to five hundred scholars on its books. Now, supposing that each of the numerous ministers had an *equal number* of children under tuition, in connexion with their churches, what an incalculable benefit would result therefrom both to society and religion. Mr. Wilson went to work, as usual, in right good earnest to raise the funds necessary for building a school-house in connexion with the church. The subscription book which he used on this occasion bears *prima facie* evidence that he went systematically to work. He begins by himself subscribing £10. This he allows to head one page. Then he has a page allotted for £5 subscribers, another for £3, and so on, *ad gradatim*, until he gets so low as 2s. 6d.

On this mission, he visited a great many places in Scotland, and met with considerable success. He preached in the late Mr. M'Cheyne's church, and received a collection of £53. In a short time he collected, from different sources, about £400, which was very nearly the sum the school-house was to cost. The building was seventy feet long, by fifty feet wide, and the foundation-stone was laid on Christmas-day.

On this solemn and interesting occasion, the various schools in connexion with the Belfast Sunday-school Union attended. It was put under the National System of Education. Mr. Wilson had often to vindicate his connexion with the Board, as both Episcopalians and Presbyterians assailed him on this point. Frequently did he challenge his opponents to a public examination of his school against theirs, but the champions of the "No Popery" party never took up the gauntlet. The school still continues under the Board, and is in a most flourishing condition.

It is delightful to again contemplate him in the position which he then occupied. Behold him, in five years after taking the oversight of a weak and infant congregation, surrounded by one of the most numerous and affectionate people in this stronghold of Presbyterianism; with a church made a third larger than it formerly was, and again well filled; a large and spacious school established, and giving instruction to from four to five hundred pupils; and having a comfortable manse near the church for himself to reside in. What a delightful picture! The Lord having thus mightily blessed his labours in this locality, his generous nature now prompted him to endeavour, with all his might, to still further increase the boundaries of Messiah's kingdom, and lend his aid towards the advancement of every philanthropic object. Hence we find him edifying and building

up other churches, and travelling on missions for benevolent institutions—such as stirring up the people of Newry, Rosstrevor, and Dundalk, towards contributing of their substance for the Deaf and Dumb Institution in Belfast, and in a short time returning home with £100 in pocket. The following are pleasing instances of his Church-extension and Church-edifying capabilities:—In the year 1840, the Synod of Ulster had appointed Groomsport as a preaching station, which was to be supplied by the neighbouring ministers. At this period Mr. Wilson was residing in Bangor, a small town about two miles from Groomsport, whither he had come to enjoy a little relaxation; but this was as foreign to his active nature as idleness is to the bee in the month of June: consequently, instead of taking repose, we find him busy in Groomsport infusing life and energy into its inhabitants. His zeal and activity were catching, and the atmosphere around him was impregnated with them. A brother minister, who is now, we believe, in Groomsport, speaks of Mr. Wilson's labours on this occasion as follows:—"He took great delight in stirring up the people to greater activity in religion; and the remembrance of his kind and familiar manner, in speaking to both old and young, is quite fresh and vivid in their minds to the present day." The effects of his visitations here were very evident, and the people were much encouraged. One evening after preaching, he,

in company with Mr. Patteson, formed a committee composed of the principal heads of families in the place, which he called a "working committee," and, to encourage them, he promised to raise, in Belfast, £50 for them, which promise he more than fulfilled, as he raised for them £70 in two days." Rendering aid to an infant church was his delight. Wherever he saw that a church was required, or observed it, after it had been established, in a declining state, for want of means or energy, he always made it a point to assist them, as the above case verifies. His repeated acts of liberality and devotedness, in collecting money for the church in Groomsport, and visiting it from time to time, exhibited to all around that no mercenary or sordid motives actuated his exertions in this locality, but that, on the contrary, all his labours sprung from his catholicity of soul, and centred in the present and ultimate glory of his Redeemer's kingdom. "Like begets like," says the proverb; and so it proved in this case, as the fire of his energetic and benevolent nature caused at first a faint flame in the bosoms of several in and around Groomsport, which his subsequent acts and visits stirred up, and in a short time it became very diffusive, and made great progress—so much so, that hundreds felt its calorific influence upon their hearts and lives, and a zealous and active spirit in the cause of religion was soon developed among the people; and, at the present

time, we can point to Groomsport for a practical demonstration of its effects, in the shape of a commodious church, numerous congregation, and large school, propelled, in the first instance, into activity by the impetus given to it by Mr. Wilson. About this period, also, the following rather ludicrous, yet pleasing, instance of his Church-reviving powers was communicated to the writer by a spectator. He was now in the zenith of his influence, and diffused life and vitality wherever that influence penetrated:—The church of ——— had undergone great alterations and improvements, and, soon after its re-opening, Mr. Wilson was solicited to preach a sermon in aid of the fund for its repairs. He complied; and upon the occasion there was a numerous assemblage, as his name had become very popular as a preacher. He ascended the pulpit, read the psalm, and commented upon it for some time. The clerk (as the leader of the psalmody is called in the North of Ireland) was a large man, middle-aged, possessed of a thundering voice, who, nevertheless, prided himself in being a tolerably fair specimen of a country Presbyterian precentor. His time had come for commencing, and off he went in a roar of sound; but, unfortunately, he had all, or nearly all, the singing to himself; for, although there were several good voices and tolerable singers in the congregation, on this occasion they were altogether mute. However, the clerk went on; but,

just as he was commencing one of the verses, Mr. Wilson leaned over the pulpit, and with the psalm-book, tapped him gently on the head. The poor fellow started and stared, but Mr. Wilson took no notice of him, and remained for about two minutes motionless as a statue. He then, in a solemn and powerfully rebuking voice and manner, said—"Friends, do you ever expect to sing the praises of God in heaven? I candidly confess that, if you don't praise Him better here than you seem to do, I fear that you will never have the opportunity of praising Him yonder (pointing upwards). It is enough to freeze one's soul to hear such singing in the house of God. Some of you, no doubt, can sing, loudly enough, profane songs, but in the praises of God you are dumb." And then, in the most bland and affectionate manner, he said—"Now, dear friends, do try if you can't sing better; I am convinced you can." He then gave out the psalm, and the congregation began afresh; and, although this rebuke came upon them like a thunder-clap, the surprise was soon over, and all who could sing did their best; and, after it was over, Mr. Wilson complimented them on making plenty of noise, if not music. However, the juvenile portion of the congregation was so grieved and ashamed of being rebuked in their own handsome church, that they brought a singing-master from a great distance to instruct them; and, very shortly afterwards, had Mr. Wilson visited the church, he

would have heard a very excellent country choir, as the product of his well-timed rebuff. Somewhere about this period, he exercised himself very much to get a new church built in a much neglected locality in the Ards, County Down. The people in this district had to travel from five to six Irish miles—which is equal to about eight English—to a place of worship, which proved a great hindrance to their observance of the outward means of grace, especially in the inclemency of the winter season. A situation on the beach for a church in this locality—Cloughy—was procured, principally through his exertions, and the building was speedily commenced and finished. Soon afterwards, it was opened by Mr. Wilson, in a sermon from Rom. xiv. 7—" For none of us liveth unto himself, and no man dieth to himself." The Rev. James Gamble, the minister of this church, says of this discourse—" I have heard many sermons, but I never heard one in which the preacher, in so singular a manner, preached to himself, as well as to the large and respectable congregation which he then addressed ;" and he also bears testimony to the great interest which Mr. Wilson took in this church, as long as he was in Ireland. We know well the locality in which this church is built, and have no hesitation in saying that it must prove a great boon to many; and it ever we are permitted to again set foot on the soil of Erin, we will most undoubtedly make it a point to visit

this interesting spot. We could easily adduce other instances of his Church-extension efforts, even whilst in Ireland; but the above will be sufficient to show that his labours were not confined to his own church and people, but, as we said before, of a diffusive and expansive nature. We could heartily wish that individuals in whom this latent principle lies hid and buried would bestir themselves, and endeavour to gain more of that burning love for Christ and His people which would soon make this principle expand and become powerful indeed. We perfectly agree with Dr. J. H. Merle D'Aubigné, in his letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury when Bishop of Chester, bearing date July, 1845, that "catholicity" is what the Church wants more than any other thing, "as it proceeds from love, faith, and hope—in one word, it is *life*." Could ministers and people be brought to resemble Mr. Wilson, in this respect, we would soon see religion flourish in our land. Each would be a little *sun* in his own sphere, whose heat and vitality would mutually combine to cast upon the world the meridian blaze of Millennium glory.

We must here pause for a little, in order that we may introduce a pleasing testimony from the congregation of Townsend Street to their beloved pastor, Mr. Wilson, as it occurred about the period of his life at which we have now arrived.

We shall offer no apology for introducing the

full description of this transaction from the *Belfast News-Letter* of that date, viz., October, 1841, as it contains matter which will repay a careful perusal:—

"PRESENTATION OF A SERVICE OF PLATE TO THE REV. JOSIAS WILSON.

"On Tuesday evening, the 5th instant, the members of the Townsend Street Presbyterian Church assembled for the purpose of presenting their minister, the Rev. Josias Wilson, with a very splendid silver tea service. The Rev. James Morgan, whom the people of Townsend Street esteem the founder of their congregation, having been invited to officiate on the occasion, preached an admirable sermon, and after the conclusion of public worship, on the motion of Mr. Thomas Edmondson, seconded by Mr. W. M'Ilwrath, Mr. Wm. Gamble, of Brookfield, took the chair. The Chairman called on one of the congregation to read the following Address to the Rev. Josias Wilson:—

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,—In requesting your acceptance of this testimonial of our affection and esteem, we desire not to approach you with the language of fulsome panegyric, as we are conscious that such a course would be equally distasteful to you and to ourselves. Our design is simply to bear our humble testimony to your excellence as a minister of the Gospel, and to your zealous and unwearied exertions in our behalf, as a portion of the Church of God.

"The erection of this place of worship was an experiment which, some years ago, the friends of church extension in Belfast attempted. Their plan was to erect a church in a destitute locality, and to invite those who were unaccustomed to attend on the ministration of the Word to enter the house of God. So far their plan was carried into effect when the building was thrown open to receive them; but the important part of the experiment remained, and that was to procure a minis-

ter by whose exertions the people should be collected, and by whose labours they should be formed into a church. Now, while all must admire the moral courage which you evinced in accepting the pastoral superintendence of the congregation, thus newly formed, we are bound in honesty and gratitude to bear our unequivocal testimony to the success with which you have collected such a numerous body of people, and to the moral and spiritual change which, under God, you have been the means of effecting in the neighbourhood—a change which has been beautifully reflected in the marked improvement of this hitherto destitute and cheerless locality.

"Whilst primarily we must attribute this mighty change which has taken place to the blessing of God himself, we must confess that, so far as human agency is concerned, your *zealous, unwearied,* and *undivided* attention to the duties of a minister of the Gospel has excited our admiration and called forth our gratitude. Your eloquent and powerful exposition of the truths of Christianity—your bold and fearless exposure of error and vice in every form—your persuasive and earnest exhortations to the performance of the duties of religion—your assiduous and affectionate attention to the sick and the afflicted, at the imminent hazard of falling a victim to the infectious diseases under which many of your people have suffered—your diligent and regular visitation and teaching 'from house to house,'—and your untiring energy in conducting, and zeal in encouraging, our Sabbath-school—all have conspired in not only forming for you a character as a highly efficient clergyman, but in contributing, by the blessing of the Most High, to the establishment and flourishing condition of our extensive and beloved Church.

"These circumstances combined have prompted us to request your acceptance of this humble testimonial of our regard. In selecting, as a permanent memorial of our gratitude, this silver tea service, we have viewed you not only as the pastor of a congregation, but also as the head of a family; and we have to express a hope that when, with your family, you

assemble around the social table, and when these expressions of our love and esteem may meet your view, they may be associated in your mind with those who gave them, and by proving to you that we are fully alive to your exertions on our behalf, you may be cheered and refreshed in the commencement of your daily work; and in the evening, when you return to the bosom of your family, after hours of anxious toil, you may be able to say—'I have laboured till I am weary, but not for an ungrateful people.'

"Accept, then, Rev. and dear Sir, this sincere though inadequate expression of our regard, accompanied as it is with the earnest prayer of a numerous and grateful people, that you may long be spared among us a faithful and efficient pastor—that you may be blessed in all the varied relations of life, in your public ministrations and in the domestic circle—and that when the event shall have taken place which, sooner or later, must separate our connexion on earth, we may all meet around the throne of God in heaven, never again to be disunited.—Signed, on behalf of the congregation,

WILLIAM GAMBLE, *Chairman*.

"At the conclusion of this Address, Mr. M'Ilwrath, in terms most flattering to Mr. Wilson, presented him with the beautiful service of plate, bearing the following inscription:—'Presented to the Rev. Josias Wilson, Minister of the Presbyterian Church, Townsend Street, by a grateful and attached Congregation.—Belfast, 1841.'"

"Mr. WILSON then read the following reply:—

"MY BELOVED FRIENDS,—I accept with mingled feelings of humility and gratitude this tasteful and very splendid token of your regard. Notwithstanding your profession, however, not to panegyrize my character and labours, as a minister of the Gospel, I do feel that you have vastly overrated both the one and the other. If you knew, as I do, how far I have come short in the holy discharge of my duties—how much sin and imperfection have been associated with my ministerial exertions

—you would not have expressed yourselves in terms so glowing and so flattering. I must attribute this, in a great measure, not to anything praiseworthy in me, but to the kindness of an indulgent and affectionate people. At the same time, it would be an affectation of what I do not feel, if I did not receive this unexpected mark of your esteem with a glad and grateful heart. Such exhibitions of confidence and love, between a pastor and his flock, are, I conceive, Scriptural in their character—agreeable to the mind of the great Head of Zion—and generally indicative of a healthy and vigorous state of the Church of Christ. My feelings at the present moment are exactly embodied in the expression (Philip. iv. 17, 18) of the great apostle of the Gentiles—'Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.' I receive these things, therefore, from you, 'as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God,'—as an evidence that I have not altogether 'laboured in vain, or spent my strength for naught and in vain.'

"It is now almost five years and a half since I undertook the oversight of your souls. And knowing that the great cause of church extension, to which you very properly refer, was in some measure at stake in my hands, and that I would be surrounded here by men of brilliant talent and devoted zeal, believe me, that 'I came among you in fear and in much trembling.' But our short history is remarkable among our sister churches for the loving-kindness of God with which we have been visited. 'The little one has become thousands, the small one a strong people; the Lord has hastened it in His time!' 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be glory.' In our case God has very signally proved the truth of His own Word, that 'the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong'—'not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.' And I do rejoice that my beloved brother, Mr. Morgan, whom we honour as the founder of this congregation, is here to-night to witness the peace, and love, and prosperity of a church, which, next to his

own, was the object of his anxious solicitude and earnest prayers; and as one external evidence of the success that has attended us, it is enough to mention, that since the pastoral relation was formed between us, you have raised the almost incredible sum of about £3,500, for ordinary and extraordinary purposes.

"This result has been produced by a simple instrumentality, which the Holy Ghost has blessed beyond my most sanguine expectation—the preaching of the Word, and visiting 'from house to house.' In the midst of my deficiencies, that have often pressed me to the earth, I have invariably attempted, in every discourse, either to convert a sinner or to edify and comfort a child of God; and while I have fearlessly reproved the sinner, and exposed error in every form when it has crossed my path, and held forth the Word of God in its own simple and irresistible charms, the result has proved that 'our speech and our preaching should not be with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.'

"Besides the preaching of the Word, I attribute, under the blessing of God, a large measure of our prosperity to pastoral visitations *from house to house*. As a Presbyterian minister, I vowed to do so, and I feel that I would not be guiltless, if on any account I neglected it. The apostles of our Lord have, in this respect, set us the example. Believe me, that while to some this might appear harassing, it is a part of my duty that affords me real gratification. To diffuse knowledge, and peace, and love throughout the domestic circle—to soothe your sorrows—to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice—are luxuries to a minister of Christ of the highest order. With regard to my visitation of the sick, even under infectious diseases, I have often had real enjoyment when I have seen the sufferer under fever lifting the burning eye to the throne of grace, and raising the quivering hand in prayer to the God of mercy—and in these circumstances *fear* of infection has been banished by *faith* in the much misunderstood and

misrepresented doctrine of the decrees of God. As a believer in these doctrines, while I am in the path of duty, I feel as safe in the wards of an hospital, as in the precincts of a palace. In all pastoral and pulpit ministrations, in the prosperity of our flourishing Sabbath-school, my highest ambition is entire devotedness to a beloved flock; and the language of the distinguished Shunamite to the Prophet Elisha (2 Kings iv. 13), is a maxim which I desire to follow—'He said unto her, Behold, thou hast been careful for us with all care, what is to be done for thee? Wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host? And she answered, *I dwell among mine own people.*'

"I did not, my dear friends, require this gift to remind me daily of your generous kindness; for I cannot go in and out of the commodious house in which I reside, without remembering that very shortly after I came among you, it was erected by your early love, and generously given as a manse for the accommodation of my family.

"These expressions of your sympathy and tenderness are calculated to make a deep impression on my heart, and while I continue to labour among you, they shall be incentives to increased diligence and zeal. 'Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for you is, that you may be saved'—that you may abound in every good word and work—that in the midst of our churches you may be like a garden that God has watered—that this house may be a spiritual birth-place to many a soul—and that, from generation to generation, there may be a seed to serve God while the sun and the moon endure.

"Your ever affectionate Pastor,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

We are not aware that Mr. Wilson ever took a prominent part in any discussion in the Synod, excepting his determined opposition to the resolution which was introduced for doing away with

the singing of paraphrases in public worship. He wrote to a great many eminent ministers, requesting their opinions upon this subject, and when it was brought before the Assembly, he manfully opposed it, and delivered a most excellent and eloquent speech against it. He was warmly attached to the use of hymns in public worship; indeed, we have often heard him lament that they were not used in the Presbyterian Church. He would say, "I know of nothing more calculated to elevate the heart of man than the singing of those beautiful hymns of the immortal Watts, Cowper, Kelly, &c." It does not appear that ever he wished to make a figure either in the Presbytery or Synod. He zealously attended all their deliberations, and anxiously watched all their movements. Sometimes he would address a few remarks in a terse and cogent style, and then hurry off to attend to his other duties. But he never for one moment forgot, when a vital question was before the Church, to give it his best attention, and, when a division came, he was always at his post. There was none of that speculative philosophy about him which is ever straining after new theories, and devising plans which never come to maturity. No; he was eminently a *practical man*, and would engage in nothing unless he could see that *immediate good* would be the result. It was this, in a great measure, which made him *rather* keep aloof from the Evangelical Alliance, after he came

to London, as he could not see that any direct good was likely to be accomplished by it. The reforms which he sought to accomplish, like the evils which he set himself to remedy, were chiefly of a practical character. He was very much opposed to horse-racing; it was a species of barbarism alike repugnant to his feelings as a man and a Christian. An incident which he witnessed in a small town called Greyabbey, about twelve miles from Belfast, made a deep and lasting impression on his mind as to the immorality of the race; and, as this is a subject of public importance, we will here introduce Mr. Wilson to speak for himself. The following is taken from the *Belfast News-Letter*, and is a speech which he delivered at a meeting for the suppression of horse-racing, held in Belfast:—

"MR. CHAIRMAN,—I am deeply impressed with a solemn sense of our responsibility on the present occasion, when such a vast multitude have come together for the discussion of a great moral and religious question—not that we are the first to discuss the subject to-day. I understand it has been largely discussed in town already, and especially in the House of Commons beneath us—and that the decision come to by certain grave senators is, that if we had the power, we would deprive the people of all enjoyment whatsoever. Now, Sir, I profess the very contrary. I wish to see every man and woman in Belfast, in Ulster, in Ireland, in the world, happy—truly happy—having a full cup of enjoyment—(hear, hear)—but, at the same time, I cannot forget that my Bible tells me there is a laughter, an enjoyment, near akin to madness—like the 'crackling of thorns under a pot,' affording a

brilliant glare for a few moments, and then it leaves you in thicker darkness than before. I may be laughed at for thus giving utterance to the Word of God—the sceptic may scorn me as he pleases—the seared infidel may frown and mutter as he will; but, as a minister of Christ's holy religion, I cannot sanction, and I hold it that the Scriptures do not sanction, any amusement before which, and after which, you cannot ask the blessing of your God. (Hear, hear.) This, Sir, is the infallible standard, the only rule by which all thoughts, and words, and actions, will be judged in the great day of the Lord. I would illustrate this position by an anecdote, which has been related concerning a bishop of your Church. This godly prelate was invited to a game at cards. 'Oh, yes,' said he, 'but first we shall ask God to bless it to us.' The person who had asked him was shocked at such a proposal, as being utterly out of place. 'Then,' said the minister of religion, 'if it be wrong to ask God's blessing, it must be wrong in me to play.' I apply this principle to every amusement. If prayer be shut out from it, and cannot appear in its presence, it must be irrational, dissipating, and ungodly in its tendency. But I do not object, for instance, to any of you (unless upon the Sabbath) going up to that lofty mountain, and surveying, in the company of your friends, the gorgeous panorama of land and water, of hill and vale, presented to your view. (Hear.) Nay, I have been there, and felt it to be a rich gratification. It elevates and expands the mind, refines the taste, and thus tends to purify the soul. I have been there with my brethren in the ministry, and we have uncovered our heads on its highest summit, and lifted our hands and hearts to God in prayer, and have praised Him for the beauty and splendour poured around us in creation, and from Nature our minds were lifted up to Nature's God. Sir, that is the enjoyment that elevates, instead of debasing the mind—that bears reflection—that will not give pain on the bed of sickness, or be a thorn in your pillow on the bed of death. (Hear, hear.) A case once occurred to me, while I resided in Drogheda, that will illustrate my senti-

ment. I visited one of my hearers in the evening, that I might get all the family together, and, as my custom is, I proposed to observe family worship. Without any previous knowledge of what was taking place, I read the ninth chapter of 1st Corinthians. I should state that this occurred the week before the great Bellewstown races, and I showed the family that Paul did not countenance the Olympic games; but referred to them for the purpose of drawing, from a heathenish custom, a spiritual lesson. He could not be supposed to give his countenance to the horse or the foot race, any more than to the shedding of blood, when he says, 'fight the good fight of faith;' neither did he countenance the brutal sport of wrestling, though, in allusion to it, he says, 'we wrestle against spiritual wickedness,' &c. Having closed the exercise with prayer, the master of the house abruptly said—'Who told you we were going, Sir?' I said, 'Where are you going?—no person told me.' 'Well, Sir, I and my friends had just arranged to go to Bellewstown on this day week, and, after what I have heard, I am resolved never to go.' (Hear, hear.) That party got their cars and provisions ready, and, instead of going to the races, they went to a splendid demesne on the lovely banks of the Boyne, and spent the day in real enjoyment, admiring the surrounding beauties of Nature. They came home, neither injured in body nor in mind; and they often thanked God that I had prevented them from mingling with the multitudes at Bellewstown. On the day they were to have gone, a man and horse met with an awful death on the very road they must have travelled to the race-course. He who says, then, that we are opposed to the enjoyments of the people is a slanderer, a foul-mouthed slanderer; but we would cut them off from all amusements on which they dare not ask God's blessing; and the only maxim we can countenance for the regulation of your conduct is—'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' (Hear.) Standing, Sir, on this solid rock, I unhesitatingly condemn all theatrical exhibitions. (Hear.) Ah, many fine young persons

have, in such painted chambers of iniquity, got the first taint of pollution, that has ended in a ruined character and dishonoured grave. I condemn, on the same great principle, all Sunday news-rooms, which are an utter disgrace, a moral nuisance in any Christian town, that should be swept away by the indignation of a Christian people. I condemn, under the same category, all railway travelling on the Lord's-day. (Hear.) I rejoice in the extension of railways. Nay, I anticipate the day, when, like an iron girdle, they will encompass our globe, and afford great facilities for spreading the Gospel of Christ throughout the world: but I must execrate the conduct of any Board in England, or Ireland, or Scotland, who, in defiance of God's law, and for their own miserable pelf, will sweep their fellow-sinners along at railway speed in Sabbath profanation. (Hear, hear.) With regard to our friends in Belfast, they make ample amends for the iniquity of Sabbath travelling, by what they have termed their kind accommodation of the public, at the last and the present Maze races. Benevolent philanthropists! This very week, in the exuberance of their generosity, overleaping all the barriers and boundaries of selfishness, they actually propose to change the time of trains, and to add new trains, and stop the trains at the Maze course, all for the accommodation of the public (Hear, hear.) Accommodation of the public! Accommodation of their own pockets, to secure, if possible, their beloved five per cent! I wish them all prosperity, by all laudable means; but, whenever they pander to the Maze races, or to Sabbath profanation, I trust the enlightened public of Belfast will see the thin disguise, and, on these occasions, let them travel alone in their glory. (Hear, hear.) In the same way, Sir, our turf gentry carry on the races for the good of the public—to improve the breed of horses. What an age of generosity and benevolence it is our lot to live in! Satan will always make his bait as attractive as he can — he will suggest some good reason for leading thoughtless men into sin. To improve the breed of horses! I hold that the reason is not a valid one—that it is an utter

absurdity. We may just as well be told that the boat races are necessary to improve, not the breed, but the build of our boats. (Hear, hear.) Notwithstanding all I have heard from respectable men, and also from infidel scribblers, I have yet to learn that, to have good horses for all proper purposes, it is requisite that once or twice a year, for a few minutes, these noble animals must be driven at a rate so furious, that at every bound the life of the horse and his rider is necessarily placed in the most imminent jeopardy. Such a struggle, as if for life or death, is irrational, and degrading to man and to beast. I cannot believe that the God of mercy smiles upon such cruelty; nay, I believe it is utterly abhorrent to the nature of a kind and compassionate Creator. (Hear, hear.) The whole scene is degrading. If there were anything pure or elevating in its character, or worthy of an immortal being, would the drunkard, and the adulterer, and the swearer, and infidel delight to frequent it. There may be some respectable men there. I tell them they mingle with scandalous companions—with the very scum and dregs of society, and I test the character of the amusement by the character of the persons who most generally and most frequently resort to it. (Hear.) Would to God that the higher orders of society—who should set a moral example to those beneath them, and whose example would be followed—were not thus leading our working classes into scenes of profligacy, and converting their rank, and station, and property, which should be blessings to the community, into a public curse. (Hear.) They will soon be carried to a horse-racer's grave; and, when we stand over the sleeping dust of one who has wasted his time and property at the race-course, oh, what a different feeling have we to that which the Christian feels when musing on the life of a Roden or a Manchester, whose names will be enshrined in sacred and perpetual remembrance. The county of Derry, in this matter, has gone far a-head of Down and Antrim. The Derry races have been completely suspended; and this has been effected mainly by the instrumentality of two honourable gentlemen of high

moral standing, Sir Robert Bateson and Colonel Jones, who were the two members for Derry. They had, for years, given £60 as the Members' County Plate; but, when they witnessed the drunkenness and vice of every description that attended the races, they nobly resolved that, in the face of ridicule and sarcasm, they would withdraw their subscription. This they did, not to pocket the amount, but, in addition to their former private subscription, they handed it over to the local farming societies. In connexion with the subject of horse-racing, what distressing facts crowd upon my view. I could tell you of many families who spent years in this degrading sport, and were steeped in its concomitant vices, and, as if the judgment of God rested on them, their very name has been swept out of the country. I know the case of a man who encouraged his son in this cruel sport, and, under disadvantageous circumstances, by his great dexterity, the young man won a race—his poor father heard of it, and applauded him to all his friends—he was proud of his son's performance. A person at midnight knocked at that father's door. He started, as he thought to receive his son, but the messenger bore melancholy tidings—the young man and his companions were returning from the scene of victory, when he was dashed out of his gig into a deep ravine, and, without a moment's warning, was hurried into the presence of a righteous God. (Oh!) Look at the whole tribe of jockies. You, Sir, have described their fantastic dress, but I have seen them put into scales in the midst of a gazing crowd, and weighed like so much swine's flesh. I was travelling through Greyabbey, on a public conveyance, when I witnessed this disgusting sight; and I asked myself, is that a brother man?—is there an immortal soul in that poor body?—did God form that creature for such a purpose?—is that the proper end of his being? At that moment I formed the resolution, in the strength of God, to expose, and, if possible, to suppress this cruel abomination. (Hear.) The genius of our holy religion has burst the fetters of the slave, and our legislators have proclaimed to the world that

man shall not trade in the flesh of his fellow-man; and shall no deliverer arise, and rescue this enslaved tribe from the fangs of a few sporting oppressors, who, for their sinful gratification, often leave poor women wailing in widowhood, and children screaming over a murdered father. (Hear.) But, the jockey submits to it, and we should not hinder him. Is that to be the rule of our conduct? Israel would have submitted to the bondage of Egypt; but Moses nobly remonstrated, opposed their slavish spirit, and brought them out to the pure air of liberty on the wild plains of Arabia. 'Let them go on in their career of sin!' Oh, Sir, it was not thus the God of mercy dealt with you and me. We would have gone down to ruin. He sent His Son to rescue us from spiritual thraldom; and He says to each of us, 'Go you and do likewise.'"

In the year 1812 he took a tour to France, in order that he might have ocular demonstration of the manners and customs of that great nation; and, as he afterwards made good use of the knowledge thus gained, we will here introduce the subject from first to last:—

"Boulogne, *Tuesday, Sept.* 8, 1842—*Nine o'clock.*

"My dearest M——, Here we are in France, and in the city of Boulogne. We had a fog in the Thames, which detained us at least three hours; so that we did not get into this city till near six o'clock this evening. We had, notwithstanding this delay, a delightful passage. The only drawback to me was, that we had to come out in a small boat a quarter of a mile, in the midst of a slight swell. James was not afraid, but, I must say, my pulse beat a little higher than usual. I think we shall get on very comfortably as fellow-travellers. We are under the necessity of remaining here till to-morrow evening at four o'clock, when we start by the diligence. The

morning diligence, which starts at nine, was quite full. We shall then reach Paris on Thursday evening at five o'clock. We are both in the best health, and have had coffee in the Boulogne style. It was excellent. I shall write to you when I reach Paris. We both unite in affectionate love to you all.

"Ever your loving husband,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

"PARIS, *Thursday Evening, Sept.* 12.

"MY DEAREST M——, We arrived to-day about three o'clock in this city of gaiety, and splendour, and fashion, from Boulogne, and we had a very fatiguing journey. We were stuck in a diligence for twenty-four hours; and, with dust and jolting, we were cordially glad to be rid of it: not that I despised the diligence, as many pretend to do. It is really a comfortable and most steady machine. We have dined, in the Parisian style, on some six or seven articles, dressed up in a fashion enough to gratify any epicure. All epicures who could afford it should come and live here. We have seen, this evening, also, many fine sights the Palais Royale, the Chamber of Deputies, the Church of St. Mary Magdeline, and a great part of the city—consisting of jet d'eau's, boulevards, arcades, &c. I think we shall start for Versailles to-morrow. We are both quite well; and we shall be careful not to injure our health. James is a most agreeable companion, doing all he can to help me on, in my ignorance. We write in affection to all.

"Your loving husband,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

Three days in Paris were quite enough for him; and it appears that even that short period had really disgusted him with all he saw—for, on the day following, he writes :—

"MY DEAREST M——, I think my eyes are nearly fully feasted with seeing all that the vanity, and pride, and folly,

and ingenuity of man could effect; and I am resolved, God helping me, to be in my own pulpit, if I possibly can, on next Sabbath.

"Yours ever,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

After he returned from this tour to the Continent, he brought the whole of what he saw in Paris before his church, in a sermon from these words:—'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."—Psalm 14th, verse 1. We will lay this sermon before our readers, as it appeared in the *Belfast News-Letter*, dated 27th September, 1842:—

"IMMORALITY AND INFIDELITY IN FRANCE.

"A SABBATH IN PARIS, AND ITS OBSERVANCE BY THE PARISIANS.

"The Rev. Josias Wilson, of Townsend Street Church, having recently returned to this town from a tour on the Continent, publicly intimated to his congregation his intention of addressing them on the state of religion in Paris—on the manner in which the Sabbath was profaned—and also of various other matters which had come under his own immediate observation during his visit to that city.

"Last Sabbath evening was set apart for this purpose, and attracted, no doubt, by the novelty of the subject which was to be treated of, as well as the popularity of the preacher, large numbers were present—the attendance indeed was so numerous, that at the hour appointed for Divine service to commence, scarcely a seat could be obtained. After the customary service had been concluded, Mr. Wilson gave as his text the first verse of the fourteenth Psalm—'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' He commenced by remarking, that it was not his intention to give a full exposition of the passage

which he had chosen, but merely as an introduction to the subject which he wished to bring before them—namely, the observations which he intended to make on the moral state of Paris, and from which observations he would draw some spiritual lessons. Having left them, he said, for a short time, for the purpose of visiting another city, he felt it to be his duty not to travel for his own sake, or his own gratification, but having witnessed scenes, to which he would immediately allude, he thought it behoved him to make them the subject of his consideration, and to tell his people of the awful and fearful manner in which God's holy day was profaned, and his law re-ected. He had selected the text which he had just read, because, with much appropriateness it might be written over the gates of that polished and infidel city, as descriptive of the great mass of its inhabitants—"The fool hath said in his heart, 'There is no God.' It was said in the Bible, 'There is nothing new under the sun." This referred, and could not be applied otherwise than to the great features of sin, and the great principles of moral duty. With regard to man—to the ingenuity of man and his practices—there were many things new; many things new in the arts and sciences. For instance, the discovery and application of steam, which was not known to our fathers—the discovery of gas, the lighting of that house, and other things—these were all new and unknown as, he said before, to their ancestors. But when the inspired writer said, 'There is nothing new under the sun,' he referred to sin, and it was sin he meant, and in its principles and prejudices there is nothing new. As it was in David's day, so is it at the present. It is every day said, 'There is no God;' and, my friends, (continued Mr. Wilson), I have seen the truth of these solemn words verified in the city of Paris. This awful principle is spread over France generally, and propagated by infidel writers. You are aware, no doubt, that those two infidel writers, Voltaire and Rousseau, have taken advantage of the state of religion in that country, and the degraded state of the Church. They have opposed the predominant religion of

France, and have overturned it nearly altogether. It is an extraordinary fact, that the booksellers' shops in Paris are literally filled with the works of Voltaire and Rousseau. If you go into a bookseller's shop in Scotland, what a contrast? You will there find on their shelves the Bible, the works of Chalmers, of Allen, of Doddridge, and of Boston; but it would make an angel weep to go into a shop in Paris, and there to see most prominently put forth the writings of these infidels. I was distressed on looking among these books at perceiving scarcely a copy of the Word of God. I saw, indeed, one or two copies, but those were large volumes—not one of the smaller editions; and these were only in a very few shops. To show how far they are sunk in infidelity, there are two tombs in a place called the Pantheon, where the bones of those two infidels, Voltaire and Rousseau, repose—they are both splendid monuments—one of them, that of Voltaire, is truly magnificent, and over it is a superscription, that he was a man who enlarged and enlightened the human mind. On the other, that of Rousseau, there is a piece of devilish ingenuity. The tomb is built of marble, and, from an aperture in it, a hand is held forth holding a torch. Over it is cut out, in richly carved stone, these words—'Being dead, he still giveth light to the world.' These, my friends are the superscriptions which are placed over the tombs of two infidels, who have deluged the world with a flood of infidelity, both on the Continent of Europe and throughout England also—and these are the objects of their most particular attention and veneration, and to whom are ascribed every virtue. And, I confess, that on visiting their cathedrals, if I had nothing of Christianity in my heart, or knew nothing more of it than what I saw there —a priest arrayed in robes of all the colours of the rainbow, making his turnings and twistings, with his mummery, manœuvres, and genuflexions—if, I say, I had known nothing more of Christianity but what I saw in him, I would almost be an infidel too. But blessed be God this is not our Christianity. Again, there is another exhibition. In every chapel I entered

I saw very small candles burning on an elevation, in the form of a triangle, and collected around them I observed a number of poor people. Some of them came forward and bought the small candles, for each of which they paid a sou or cent. There was a nail fastened to each candle, and I saw one poor man walk forward, hang up his candle, and then fall down before it to pray, it might be for the soul of a friend, in purgatory When I saw these things, I remembered the words of my Lord, and when I witnessed these abominations, I thought of Christ when he swept the money-changers out of the temple. Had Christ, my Master, been there as in the days of the Jewish temple, when He declared that they had made His Father's house a den of thieves, and when He made a scourge of cords, and drove them out of it, He would, in like manner, have swept out these ceremonies from the cathedrals of Paris. No wonder that Popery has degenerated into infidelity—and that the infidel Parisians have said 'There is no God.' The great mass of the people say there is no God; but none save the fool can say so. If you take up a watch and examine it, you will not certainly say that its construction was the work of chance; but you must give credit to some ingenious artist; or, suppose you saw a house in a desert place splendidly built, with its doors, and windows, and its roof, and everything in the best style which the workman could make it, would you say that it was the work of chance? Nay, rather you would draw the conclusion that it was erected by the skill of the architect, and the hands of the builder. So, in like manner, when we look at the revolution of the heavenly bodies—the sun, the centre of the solar system—day and night—summer and winter—the ebbing and flowing of the tide—the concave arch of heaven, bestudded with stars—what wise man will not trace the origin of them all to a God of infinity and power? None but a fool will say to the contrary—none but a fool will say, 'there is no God.' If there were no revealed Word, Nature herself would proclaim that there is a God—a God of power and majesty. Look at the mountain range behind us

—at the glorious harvest which an all-wise and munificent God has given us—and at the waves which lash our rocky coast—and who is he that will not acknowledge all to be the work of an Almighty Being? [Mr. Wilson proceeded, in an eloquent strain, to establish the authenticity and truth of the Bible, opposed to infidel views, and alluded more particularly to prophecy, the fulfilment of which had established, beyond all doubt, the truth of God's Holy Word, and that the man who rejected it, rejected the Author—God—who gave it; and that none can rightly believe in a God without believing in his revealed Word also. He then alluded to the unhappy state of the infidel, who cut himself off from the Author of his being—who lives in the enjoyment of sin for a season—a momentary pleasure—and shuts himself out from the presence of God for ever And as in France, and in England also, when he has wasted his substance in ungodly living, he takes away his life with his own hands, and rushes into the presence of an insulted God, with self-murder on his head. He implored the infidel, if any were present, to think on these things—he spoke it in love to their souls—and be so no more. After these general observations, he went on to show what was the state of Paris in a moral point of view.] I have stated already that the words of my text might be written over the gates of Paris, as being very appropriate to the manner in which they observe the Sabbath. But you will naturally ask—Why take the Sabbath day alone? My answer is, because, in my opinion, the observance of the Sabbath is the test of piety, either in an individual or a whole nation. I judge of a man's character through life from the manner in which he spends the Sabbath. Let me see or know how he does this, and I will tell you how he lives. The Sabbath is to me as a barometer, which tells me, as it were, what is in the heart of man; and I judge of a city in the very same way. What is the moral condition of Paris? I will tell you, my friends, nothing but what I have seen, what I have witnessed myself, or what I know from undisputed authority; I will not exaggerate anything. I may here remark, that I

have lamented many a time that in Belfast there should be instances of Sabbath-breaking, but what is it when compared with Paris? And I now state a few circumstances, with all truth and sincerity. When proceeding to public worship on the Sabbath in Paris, I saw in every street through which I passed only four or five shops closed. I speak generally; they were all open with these exceptions, and seemed to be more busy than on any other day. There were bonnet-makers' shops, milliners, silversmiths, silkmercers, goldsmiths, and woollen drapers, with their journeymen and journeywomen, apprentices and all their work-people, as busy as if it were not the Sabbath; and it grieved me to see the poor little boys in the windows cleaning various articles, women bowed down at their work, girls busily engaged in arranging drapery and silk mercery in the windows, as we see in our own town on a fair or market day. I saw them, with feelings of astonishment, actually paving the streets, the workmen busy, and the streets, as we sometimes see when any public work is going on, and this, too, by order of the authorities—by command of the municipal corporation. This is the Sabbath; but infidelity has no Sabbath—no rest for the people under its bloody reign I saw in one street a splendid mansion—a beautiful cut stone edifice—there are none in Belfast to equal it in height, being upwards of six stories, and there I saw stone-masons building it One of the stone-cutters was employed in sculpturing out the figure of an angel over a window. While I looked on that profanation of the Sabbath, I thought, within myself, that if the angels of God would look down upon it, or God himself, they would not consider it very angelic. There was a Protestant church opposite, where I worshipped, and on coming out, I observed eight or ten painters employed painting the front of another house. This Sabbath profanation is carried on not only in Paris, but at Versailles, one of the royal palaces—the palace is opened on the Lord's day to the public—the waterworks play on that day—and, notwithstanding the judgment of God, by which lately nearly an hundred lives were lost ..

returning from a scene of Sabbath desecration, still, with the sanction of the King and the Queen, Versailles is converted into a very hell upon earth on the blessed day of God. About four or five o'clock in the evening I observed the shops beginning to be closed. What was this for think you? It was for the purpose of giving them an opportunity of going to Versailles and to the theatres. There is a newspaper (holding one up) called the *L'Echo*, containing the theatrical news for Sabbath evening. This is the food for the people of Paris on the Lord's day. It contains an account of the opening of fourteen theatres on that day fortnight; and while we sit here at this moment speaking of this distressing account, these theatres, with upwards of three hundred and thirty actors, are opened, and performance is going on. They act a tragedy of the crucifixion, and of heaven and hell, to turn them all into ridicule. I was wrong in saying that there were fourteen theatres—one of them is used for holding concerts of profane music; another is used as a gymnasium, or circus, for horsemanship. On the Sabbath to which I allude, there were only thirteen of these theatres open—the other, the fourteenth, was, as it is announced in this paper, closed, in consequence of some repairs which it was at that time undergoing. This is given as an apology, in the same manner as if an apology were given for one of your houses of worship being closed for the same reason. You will ask, perhaps, are these theatres well attended? The streets are literally filled with persons—both men and women—crowding in—so crowded, that the soldiers are sent out, by order of Government, to preserve order. I saw a crowd pouring into these dens of hellish infamy, which would reach the distance of about three or four hundred yards. When going to another Protestant place of worship, I went to see one of their own cathedrals. These Popish cathedrals are most gorgeous edifices—they are full of paintings and crosses, and the one which I visited was capable of containing four thousand souls. They are very poorly attended; but if you were to judge of the religion by the number of the priests that

walk through the streets arrayed in full canonicals, you would, I have no doubt, say and think that the Romish Church in France was prospering. Their churches are, however, very badly attended, there being not more than from fifty to a hundred in each of them, and the greater part are women. I was asked, by a friend who accompanied me, to see the *Lamorge*, or the place of the dead, where all the persons who commit suicide are brought. In one morning there will be brought into this place either four or five who have committed suicide during the night, and hung around the walls are the clothes of the dead, for the purpose of being claimed by their friends. This, my friends, is the end of the infidel—the end of the fool who sayeth 'There is no God.' While looking at this scene of Sabbath desecration, one thing powerfully rested on my mind, with regard to a man who had apostatized from the Church of England, and joined the Romish faith—I refer to the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Spencer. This man, with all the zealotism of a proselyte, went over to France to get the French priests joined in a concert of prayer for the conversion of England to Popery. I could not help asking—Did he see the sights I had witnessed when engaged in this mission? If so, would it not have been more befitting to have got the clergy of France to pray for the conversion of their own nation from that infidelity in which their idolatry has plunged the inhabitants? Would it not be work sufficient for them to pray that the shops of Paris might be closed—that the house-building—the paving of the streets—and, above all, that the theatres might be shut on the day of God? No, this is not his object; but, like the Pharisee, he literally compasses sea and land to convert, not an individual, but a nation, to that system of faith which has produced these direful results in France—and if his object were obtained, he would make England more like infidel France than it has yet been. But why need we be so much astonished about France? Spain is a Popish land; and there—in Madrid—on Sabbath days the theatres are all open too, and also that lady-like and delicate sport, bull-fighting, is indulged

in; and ladies, I regret to say, witness and are present at these sports. There is also Belgium—a place which is most faithful to Rome, considerably more so than infidel France—there the theatres are also open on the Sabbath. But we need not leave the borders of our own land to see such profanation. We need not be astonished at the mention of Sabbath desecration on the Continent. Look at Kilkenny—the seat of a Romish bishop—where, during the time of spring and harvest, the labourers are hired on the Sabbath; where, at their teetotal soirees, with a priest and a Romish barrister at the head of it, they have a public ball—opened on the evening of the Lord's day, and kept up till an early hour on the following morning; and in Drogheda, where I lived myself for a number of years, *patterns* are celebrated on the evenings of the Lord's day, when hundreds and thousands desecrate the day of God; and I believe that if the Romish system get predominance in Ireland, you will soon have Belfast, and every town in the country, as degraded as Paris. There was one thing that struck me very forcibly as I walked through Paris—the forbearance of God. I wondered that He spared them—that He did not cause the earth to open and swallow them; but I remembered the word of the Lord by Isaiah the prophet—'My ways are not as your ways, nor are my thoughts as your thoughts.' The time is not long since past when God sent a fearful judgment upon them—the period of the Revolution—when France was deluged in blood, and when a fearful vengeance was taken. Their cup of iniquity is again filling up, and *a bloody retribution, I fear, awaits them,** which may God of His mercy avert! But you will, I am sure, be ready to ask, 'Are there no witnesses for the truth in France?' Yes, there are. As in the days of Malachi, so is it in our own day—so is it in Paris—there are many serious Christians there. My

* Without attempting to make Mr. Wilson appear as a *prophet*, we may just point to the Revolution of 1848 as verily fulfilling his prediction.

first visit, on Sabbath, was to the Lutheran Church, where there is a flourishing Sunday-school in connexion with it. I went in and there saw the minister examining the children on some Christian doctrine; he was asking them various questions —the little boys were ranged on one side, and the girls on the other, and there the man of God was telling these dear children of the way of salvation. I listened to him and them with feelings of gratification; and from my heart I prayed that God would bless and protect them, and that they might live to be witnesses for the truth, in which prayer I ask you to join with me. I must not forget to mention that I went to the Wesleyan chapel, and was delighted to see and hear its minister boldly preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ to a united congregation. All these are witnesses for the truth. These churches are all well attended, and I was told by one clergyman that nearly one-fourth or one-fifth of his congregation were Roman Catholics; and I feel assured that, if the proper means are adopted, France will turn to Protestantism ere long. In conclusion, permit me to state, that from all I have seen, I wish to guard you against entertaining the slightest disrespect for the Bible; my veneration for that blessed book was evinced when I saw it trampled underfoot in Paris. It is the Word of Life, and when you think on these things, should you not love it more? The Bible has been circulated in France to a great extent—more than 70,000 copies have been distributed last year, and if this continue, it will be the death-blow to Popery and infidelity there. I have still the same opposition to Popish doctrine, but I love Roman Catholics—the people who profess it. I love them—I pray for them—and I pity them—for I know they are deluded. Again, I wish to observe, that I never before entertained such a strong feeling with regard to Sabbath observance Sabbath observance I conceive to be the blessing of our country; for when I see the profanation of the Sabbath I dread the curse of God on the nation. [We regret that want of space does not permit of our entering more fully into Mr. Wilson's

eloquent discourse.] He concluded, by earnestly imploring all before him to bless God for the privileges which they enjoyed, and in their prayers to God to remember France. Oh! how he was distressed and grieved at his heart on that Sabbath evening in Paris, when he saw thousands of poor infidels and Romanists pouring into the theatres—perhaps more than 10,000. They were all aware of the scenes which were enacted during the Revolution, and they had all heard of the torrents of blood which flowed through the streets of Paris during that fearful time. To the inhabitants of Paris that time may come again; but we earnestly pray that God may grant them conversion to the acknowledgment and practice of His truth.

"After the conclusion of the sermon, a collection was taken up for the Home Mission. The amount received we did not learn."

After he had preached this sermon, he writes to a friend:—

"I have been exceedingly busy since I came home. The people rejoice to see me back. On last Sabbath week I had two great congregations—full both morning and evening. In the evening I gave some account of the moral and religious state of London on the Sabbath, especially of the performance of the Puseyite in his church. There could not be fewer than 1,500 present. On last Sabbath I brought before my people a Sabbath in Paris. The church was crowded, and forms had to be brought in. There were three or four reporters present. The people were very attentive. I hope the occasion was not an unprofitable one. My great point was to urge on the people, more than ever, reverence for the authority of the Bible, respect for the whole of the Lord's day, and the necessity of having the minds of all, especially the young, established in the true faith. I also urged on them the necessity of prayer for all places that were openly denying God."

In a few months after this the Bi-centenary

celebration of the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in the North of Ireland occurred; and, on this interesting event, he writes to Mrs. Crooks :—

"TOWNSEND STREET MANSE,
BELFAST, 28*th Jan.*, 1843.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,— . . . . Your gift came to hand just as I was about to start on a tour for our Bi-centenary Fund, in County Derry. This town I felt to be exceedingly interesting, on account of the important object connected with it, because it leads the mind of the Presbyterian back 200 years, to a spirit-stirring period in the history of his Church, and connects him with great and noble ancestors, of whom the world was not worthy, who were filled with the true missionary spirit, and were ready to give up all they had, that they might proclaim, throughout the province of Ulster, 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' The people to whom I was sent, in the towns of Ballymoney, Coleraine, Newtownlimavady, and Dungiven, displayed a fine spirit worthy of a good and great cause. We were astonished at their liberality, and they were astonished at it themselves. We now expect that we shall raise for the fund £15,000. I hope you will all be enabled, by grace, to act a noble part in Drogheda. The eyes of all Ulster will be upon you. On last Lord's day my people put their hands to the work, and, in the course of ten or fifteen minutes, raised £275, which, with sums since sent to me, has raised our list to £283; and, on Sabbath, I trust that it will be made upwards of £300. The people delighted me, they were so animated and so united.

"This is an intensely interesting period to me in my ministerial history. I have just completed my seventh year in Townsend Street. On last Thursday night seven years I arrived with my family in Belfast, and on last Thursday we gave a soiree to our Sabbath-school, when I was surrounded by 683

teachers and children—a fine sight. On to-morrow, Sabbath, I shall preach my seventh anniversary sermon, from the words of the Spirit in Leviticus, chapter xxv. verse 22. The Lord has been to me and my family a most gracious God since we came here. We have now the largest congregation in this town, and it is increasing in piety and in numbers daily, and seems to be very united and attached to me and mine. What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies to me? But, my ever dear friend, we must soon leave all this ever-changing, bustling scene. The sights that we now see we shall soon see them no more. We shall soon bid farewell to the Church and the world, to relations, and all on earth. For us the winding-sheet and coffin will soon be prepared, and our spirits will be ushered into an unknown eternity. If we have forsaken all sin, renounced every beloved lust, and are washed in the fountain of Immanuel's blood; if the work of entire sanctification is steadily going forward in our nature, and the remnant of sin passing away, then welcome sickness, welcome death, welcome eternity and Jesus, the constant, unchanging, loving Saviour. Oh! I do trust that all is right between you and Jesus; that you are hourly bound up in Him, engrossed with Him day by day, never to be separated from Him. Amen.

Ever yours, my very dear friend, in Christian love,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

CHAPTER VI.

LABOURS IN LIVERPOOL AND MANCHESTER IN 1844.

IN the year 1844 the Directors of the Home Mission of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland had undertaken to supply a preaching station, opened in Liverpool for the benefit of resident Irish Presbyterians, and Mr. Wilson was deputed, in the beginning of February, to supply it for three or four Sabbaths. His labours here were highly appreciated, and crowned with abundant success, as the following letter will testify :—

"LIVERPOOL, *6th Feb.*, 1844.

"MY DEAREST ———, On last Lord's day the morning was very severe, and yet we had a larger attendance than on the preceding Sabbath; and in the evening there were, I should think, 900 present, and they were most attentive. On yesterday evening they held a meeting of committee, for the purpose of devising some measure for the erection of a church. There were at least forty present; and I should think they could subscribe about £400. I was with them until near eleven o'clock, and had then to leave, to cross the ferry. I go off to Manchester to-day, for the purpose, as Dr. Chalmers would say, of 'excavating' for Irish Presbyterians, and I purpose to remain there two days."

He arrived in Manchester on the 6th February, and although a perfect stranger in the town, he

soon managed to "excavate" ten families of Presbyterians who had left the North of Ireland, and had not attached themselves to any church since they came to England. This encouraged him very much, and by some means or other he found out that there was residing in the town a very influential person, a Presbyterian, who had also lately come from the North of Ireland. Mr. Wilson called upon him, and stated the object of his visit, and the encouragement he had already met with; and this individual, having felt much the want of a Presbyterian church in Manchester, gladly consented to aid Mr. Wilson in his excellent intentions. They accordingly set out to "excavate," and in two days found out fifty families similarly situated to the ten which Mr. Wilson had pioneered on the day of his arrival. On the 8th February five individuals met Mr. Wilson in Mr. Longmore's, and received from him a report of his proceedings in Manchester, and there and then they formed themselves into a visiting committee, and resolved to prosecute with diligence the good work which Mr. Wilson had so successfully begun, and to take whatever further steps might be considered necessary for the commencement of a congregation, and the procuring of ministerial supplies. Mr. Wilson drew out a memorial to the Directors of the Home Mission, and recommended the visiting committee to carry it with them, and get it signed as extensively as possible.

After his return home, he wrote the following letter to Mr. Longmore :—

"BELFAST, 24*th Feb.*, 1844.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot allow this day to pass without addressing you. On last Thursday I got home in health, peace, and safety. After I left you in Manchester, I received information from my Presbytery that I must remain another Sabbath; so that I had a trial of four Lord's days in Liverpool. All that I there saw fully convinced me, that if we could get a man of the right stamp settled in Liverpool, we might at once have a congregation there of 1,200 or 1,500 people. My attendance, for the last two Sabbath evenings, amounted fully to that number. Now I am anxious about your operations in Manchester. Since I came home I have been telling all my brethren in the ministry that you will have a memorial with them at the meeting of Presbytery, on the first Monday of March; and they are greatly delighted to hear it. Will you let me hear, by return of post, what you are doing? I heard that you had printed the memorial, and were circulating it. You should divide the town into districts, and get certain persons to take certain districts, and get it largely signed. May I beg a line from you without delay. I earnestly hope that you will be able to inform me that you have not only put your shoulder to the wheel but kept it to it. Mr. Weir wrote to me, that some one had suggested the propriety of a lay agent for Manchester. It would not do. What God has so blessed in Liverpool He will bless among you.

"Very sincerely yours,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

"BELFAST, 29*th Feb.*, 1844.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am sorry that you are not forwarding the memorial at once. Since my return I have talked to Dr. Cooke, Dr. Edgar, &c., &c., &c., about Manchester. My account of it has deeply interested them; and I gave them all to

understand that they might expect your memorial on Tuesday next, and they and I will be greatly disappointed if it be not forthcoming. You have three times as many names to it as we had to the Liverpool memorial. The Presbytery will receive it with great interest, and act upon it when you are ready to receive their agent. I would have you send it off to me by the speediest method; and then we can afterwards arrange about opening any place you may pitch upon. Nothing more need be done at the Presbytery than receive you and approve of the scheme, to be acted on as soon as may be.

"I am, yours ever,

"JOSIAS WILSON

"Mr. Longmore."

The long-looked for, and anxiously sought after memorial, at length came to hand.

"TOWNSEND STREET MANSE,
"BELFAST, *5th March*, 1841

MY DEAR SIR,—I had the extreme gratification of presenting your monster memorial to the Presbytery to-day. The unrolling of it astonished and delighted the members. They received it in the most cordial and harmonious manner, and at once complied with its prayer. You are expected to look out for a proper place for preaching in, and a committee is appointed to wait on Dr. Cooke (who was not present), to request him to go to Manchester to open the house for you. It is not thought that he could go over before the second Sabbath of April, as his sacrament will take place on the first Sabbath of that month However, we have not yet seen him, and therefore cannot say. Let me know at once when and where you can get a place. What of the Corn Exchange? The matter is now in a fair way of progressing; and I trust that God will crown it with abundant success.

"The application from Liverpool to be organised as a con

gregation was also most cordially received to-day. I trust this is the commencement of great things for England.

"Yours, ever sincerely,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

The following is a copy of the memorial which was presented to the Presbytery on this occasion:

"TO THE REVEREND THE PRESBYTERY OF BELFAST

"We, the undersigned, inhabitants of Manchester, originally from the Province of Ulster, and members of the Synod of Ulster, or of the Irish Secession Church, beg to approach your reverend body with those feelings of affection which we have never ceased to cherish towards you. We have rejoiced to hear of the extension of our parent church in the South and West of our native land. We have blessed God that He has put it into your hearts to send missionaries to the heathen in India, and to the seed of Abraham in the land of Palestine, and our hearts have been especially filled with gratitude with the intelligence that our Irish brethren in Liverpool are now favoured with the ordinances of religion by ministers from our own beloved church. But while the spiritual destitution of Irish Presbyterianism in Liverpool is great, we beg to impress it on your minds that in Manchester it is vastly greater. There are hundreds of our countrymen in that great town wandering as sheep without a shepherd; and while Romanists, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Covenanters from Ireland, are followed by their respective pastors, we have been left neglected and uncared for; and our earnest and united cry to your Reverend Presbytery, or to your Missionary Directors, is to send us a countryman of our own, whom we shall surround with warm Irish affections; and we have no doubt, but with the Divine countenance, we would soon have one of the largest congregations in connexion with your venerable Assembly. And, as in duty bound, we shall ever pray that Jesus, the only

Head of our Church may bless you, and continue to make you a blessing."

Here follow the signatures—500 in number.

The Exchange was procured as a temporary place of worship.

"BELFAST, *13th March*, 1844.

"MY DEAR SIR,—In consequence of the celebration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper coming on here in the course of three Sabbaths—that is, on the first Sabbath in April—it is impossible to get either Dr. Cooke or Mr. Morgan to go to Manchester before the second Sabbath in April. On that Sabbath, I think you may calculate on the service of one or the other. I am sorry for the delay, but it is better to make a good commencement than a poor beginning. I have little doubt but that Dr. Cooke's services will be obtained on the day I have specified. Your memorial has excited great attention, and has caused not a little stir. A great interest is now felt in our English Mission, and I do trust God will make it the means of great good to many souls.

"With regard to my poor services, you shall certainly have them, God willing. As soon as I can with propriety leave home, I have no objection to give you three or four Sabbaths after you are set afloat—say in June.

"Ever truly yours,

"JOSIAS WILSON.

"Mr. Longmore."

"TOWNSEND STREET MANSE,

"BELFAST, *April* 13, 1844.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I know you have heard of our final arrangements with regard to the opening of Manchester by Dr. Cooke. He is to be followed by Mr. Hamilton, of York Street, for at least three Sabbaths; and I trust Mr. Denham, of Derry, will succeed Mr. Hamilton. This will place you, as

far as human instrumentality can do it, in a most favourable position.

"But I am happy farther to inform you that our missionary agent, Mr. David Clarke, is going over to visit you. He will be among you some day next week, or the beginning of the week after next, for the purpose of getting up prayer-meetings, and seeking out the people; so, you see, we wish to give you a good *launch.* I do hope that the Great Head of Zion will be among you, and cause His Word greatly to prevail in the conviction and conversion of many souls to Jesus Christ. To prepare for the Doctor, you must get up *very large placards,* that *half-blind* people may be able to read them. By all means have a public collection on the occasion to meet expenses, and to set you fairly up; and do on this occasion also as our friends did in Liverpool—ask every man belonging to every other church in Manchester to come and help you in this matter on the day of your opening.

"In this way I doubt not you will get £50, and you will require it all. You should at once get a gown and bands for the minister. They have got one in Liverpool, but it is made of too heavy silk. It is a load to carry. Get very light silk, and you will get it for very little—say £2 or £3, and you can get some friends to make it up. Get as many gentlemen to act as collectors as possible, and let your placards be at least three-quarters of a yard long, and more than half-a-yard broad.

"Ever sincerely yours,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

When, as he *naviettely* expresses it, he had got the people in Manchester "afloat," he came over to visit them, to see if their vessel was sailing buoyantly over the waves, or buffeting against the storm, and, previous to his coming, he wrote to Mr. Longmore as follows:—

"TOWNSEND STREET MANSE,
"BELFAST, *July* 11, 1844.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—If possible for you to do so, I am anxious that you should get me a few stations ready, in which I could hold prayer-meetings, or preach, on Monday evening the 22d, Tuesday the 23d, Wednesday the 24th, and Thursday the 25th. I should wish you to have them engaged at a convenient hour for the people to attend, so that I might on the 21st, at my service, publicly announce said prayer-meetings. I want you to write for me to Stockport, and try if, through some friend, you could procure for me a public room for preaching in there, on a week night. I am anxious to unfurl the "blue banner" in that crowded town. Do you know any one in Leeds who might be the means of publicly introducing me in that town also?—I am, ever yours,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

He arrived in Manchester on the 18th July, in company with Dr. Edgar of Belfast, and, on the same evening, a public meeting was held in the Corn Exchange, for the purpose of procuring the Christian aid of the public on behalf of the infant church. Mr. Wilson addressed the meeting in his usual hearty, warm, and fervent style. He remained three Sabbaths, on each of which he preached to the congregation. The attendance increased on each occasion ; indeed, so great was the increase during his short visit, that, on the last day of his preaching, the large room was quite full with attentive hearers. This Paul-like visit produced a very favourable change on the congregation, and they afterwards "thanked God and took courage."

In addition to his Sabbath labours, he preached, or lectured, every evening, in various parts of the town, and spent the greater part of each day in visiting, at *their own homes*, the adherents of the congregation.

Such was the zealous missionary spirit which he displayed, in again coming to visit the band of Presbyterians whom he had been instrumental in collecting together ; and it is with great pleasure that we are enabled to add, that he found them prospering, and the "blue banner" floating gaily and displaying all its formerly-hidden beauties and that, in a short time, they erected a church. which they denominated "Trinity Presbyterian Church," and which is, at the present time, in a flourishing state. Had we the power, we would be disposed to call this church after him. At all events, we will entertain the hope that, if it does not bear his name upon its front, it partakes largely of his nature, and is baptized, by the unction given it from on high, with his zealous and catholic spirit. Mr. Longmore says :—

"The result of Mr. Wilson's labours is, that a handsome church, with schools attached, has been built at a cost of about £5,000 An excellent minister is labouring in an increasing and prosperous congregation. The schools are under the superintendence of highly qualified male and female teachers, and have been very successful. Mr. Wilson had the pleasure of witnessing the partial result of his labours, when he attended the meeting of the English Synod in Manchester, in 1846. He then visited the buildings then in course of erection. He

expressed himself highly pleased with the whole arrangements. Other engagements prevented him attending the opening services, as requested by the committee."

The congregations of Liverpool and Manchester, to testify their appreciation of his excellent ministry, gave him separate, pressing, and urgent invitations to become their pastor, but he respectfully declined them, as he could not entertain the idea of leaving his attached people in Belfast, little thinking that, in the providence of God, it was ordained that, in the latter end of the same year, he was to pass through this ordeal, and leave for ever the church and land of his nativity.

CHAPTER VII.

CALL TO RIVER TERRACE CHURCH, LONDON, IN 1844.

We have now traced his career to the year 1844, and have seen that, during the twenty-three years of his ministry, he received *four calls* from different churches, three of which he accepted, namely, Tassagh, Drogheda, and Belfast, and that, in this year, he also received an invitation from the nucleus of each of the churches which he had been instrumental in collecting together in Liverpool and Manchester, to become their settled pastor, and we now come to his seventh and most important call of all, namely, that to River Terrace Church, London. This congregation had been, for some considerable time, in a declining state, although great efforts were made by its few members to remedy this declension; and, notwithstanding that they had had most excellent and pious ministers—such as the late Rev. John M'Donald, afterwards Missionary to Calcutta, and Mr. Lorimer, now one of the Professors in Presbyterian College, London—still, there was a little band of Presbyterians, principally Scotchmen, who were largely imbued with the spirit of Knox, and whose Presbyterian Zion was still closely ri-

vetted to their hearts by Gospel and paternal precepts, to whom the simple, yet heart-softening strains of the old Scottish Psalms had a something within them which carried their minds back to their juvenile days, when, at the call of the Sabbath bell, they were wont to be led by their father to the old church, with its ivy-mantled tower and venerable structure, wherein they were initiated, by baptism, into the Christian faith, and in which they first pledged their sacramental vows at the table of the Lord. Here, by the river side, they loved to linger, and think upon Zion.

Precisely at this period the successful operations of Mr. Wilson in Liverpool and Manchester, as already stated, had received a great deal of publicity through both the English and Irish press; and, consequently, the attention of the River Terrace people was directed towards him. They believed that he was a minister of precisely the stamp which their church wanted to arrest its decay, and to infuse into it principles of activity and vitality, and they, hearing that he was in Manchester, wrote, requesting him to come and preach for them; but this he declined, and soon afterwards returned home. He had not, however, many days returned to his peaceful home and loving people, before he received hints from a friend in England that there was a probability of his being called upon to leave his Townsend Street charge. The letter which contained this

intimation was dated 26th August, 1844, and, after some preliminary remarks about the religious destitution of England, the writer proceeds to say :—

"I refer to these subjects for the purpose of leading you to think seriously and prayerfully of a change from the sphere of labours in which you are at present engaged, to one in this country. I do not speak more definitively at the present, but this I say, that before long the question may come before your mind in a more tangible shape, and I do hope you may feel it to be your duty to assent to the request that may be made to you."

These hints were perfectly unintelligible to Mr. Wilson; but his ignorance was speedily removed, for, in two days after the receipt of this letter, he received an official communication from River Terrace Church, stating that there had been a meeting of the heads of families, in connexion with it, to take into consideration the subject of giving him a call to become their pastor.

The following letter was addressed to the Rev Dr. Hamilton, of London, in reply to his inquiries respecting Mr. Wilson, and, as it was solely a private letter, and not intended for the public, there is, consequently, a plainness about it which might have been avoided had the writer intended it for publicity. However, we are anxious to lay it before our readers, as it contains an excellent testimony to Mr. Wilson's character and labours, from one of his most intimate friends in the

ministry, and who, from a long acquaintance and intercourse, was well qualified to give an opinion on his general usefulness:—

"BELFAST, 16*th August*, 1844.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I can reply to your letter respecting Mr. Wilson with entire satisfaction to my own mind and great credit to his character. He is one of our very best men and best ministers. His preaching is greatly admired, and his ministry has been much blessed. It was I who brought him here some ten years ago, and I have never ceased to praise God for him and his ministry. Perhaps no minister in Ireland has been more successful. He is eloquent, and ready, and hearty, and generous. His sermons are very solemn, and his walk serious; he is very cheerful, but I never saw him too mirthful. No man living knows him better than I do, and I love and esteem him exceedingly. His energy and perseverance are indomitable. He is not literary, but he does not go beyond his depth. I would like, for my taste, deeper theology than his sermons contain; but he preaches the Gospel plainly, soundly, and often powerfully. His preaching is chiefly practical, and he never attempts to go beyond his depth. He could take his place at Exeter Hall as *popularly* as most of those who go there. His voice and manner are very good. Whether he would go to London is, I think, very doubtful. His situation here is very comfortable, and he is most useful. He declined going to Liverpool, and was influenced in that decision by my advice, for I could not see how he would be more useful there than where he is. He has collected the largest congregation in Belfast, and no minister is more beloved by his people than he is. He has all that heart could desire in a liberal support, a good manse, a fine school-house, crowded church, and a large measure of public esteem. It would be a very plain and urgent call that would justify him in removing from his present charge. He is sometimes blamed

with being rash in speech and precipitate in action; but his good nature and zeal far more than counterbalance anything of this kind with all who know him. His removal from Belfast I would account a great personal bereavement to myself, and a public calamity to the church and the community. *We will not easily let him go.* May the Lord direct.

"Ever yours, affectionately,

"JAMES MORGAN, D.D.

"To Rev. James Hamilton."

At the meeting above referred to, the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—

"SCOTCH CHURCH, RIVER TERRACE,
27th August, 1844.

"Moved by Mr. Finch (elder), seconded by Mr. Miller—

"'This meeting having heard and considered the letters in favour of the ministerial gifts of the Rev. Josias Wilson, of Belfast, are of opinion, under all the circumstances of our position, and the leadings of Providence in this matter, that a CALL should now be given to him to become the pastor of this congregation.'—(Carried unanimously).

"G. J. PICKETT, *Chairman.*"

Mr. Wilson's mind was now opened to the subject, and we find that his surprise gave place to much perplexity and hesitation. Hence he says, in reply to this communication:—

"I resolved to sleep on the subject on Monday night, and write to you on Tuesday. On Tuesday I wrote a long letter, and went to the post-office, and on my way I *hesitated and did not post it*. . . . . . I am now writing my second letter, and I am trying to write in a state of *mental hesitation.*"

In the conclusion of this letter, he says :—

"I now feel that I conclude nearly where I started. I feel that I am writing like one surrounded by a thick mist ; and, in the mean time, I confess I cannot see my way."

In the meantime, the members of the Presbyterian Church in River Terrace were not idle. Besides using daily and urgent appeals to his philanthropy, Christianity, &c. "to come over and help them," they got up a call, and lost no time in having it moderated; and before he had time to make up his mind how to act in the matter, or get himself extricated from his dilemma, the call, unanimously agreed to, was at his door, signed by ninety-two individuals, being nearly all the congregation. Influence and persuasion of a collateral character were also had recourse to, and a brother minister writes to him as follows, urging strongly upon him the necessity of coming to London :—

" . . . I do hope, my dear Sir, that when you look to all these things—to the field and the opening before you, the influence you may exert for good, the manner in which the call has reached you, unsolicited and unexpected by yourself, the field at home fully occupied, the church which you leave more easily filled than the one to which you are called, while your usefulness in the latter would vastly outweigh anything which you could possibly expect to do in the former—when you take all these things into consideration, I do seriously hope and trust that you, and all your brethren in the Belfast Presbytery, shall see it your duty to agree to the request that is made. The people in London want to be roused by Irish activity—they require spurring. The means are ample, were

you to come and call them forth. I do not know what, under God, could not be done."

The next step which they took was to present the call to the Belfast Presbytery, and the Rev. James Hamilton, (now Doctor), and William Stevenson, Esq., were appointed to represent the members of the church, and to present the call before the Presbytery.

The Presbytery, after duly considering the subject, entertained the call, and Mr. Wilson, after maturely reflecting upon it, and consulting a number of his brother ministers, accepted it, believing that it was again the voice of God calling upon him to go up to the metropolis of the world, even London, and saying, "For I have much people in that city." We may just here remark, that the spirit in which Mr. Wilson came to London was precisely that of the Apostle Paul, viz., "determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified;" hence he entered it as a no-party man. Polemical disquisitions between Protestants he detested; he wanted all Protestants to sink their minor shades of difference, and to fight unanimously under the banner of the cross against the common enemy. Still no Presbyterian was more attached to his own sect, or more ready to defend it if occasion required; but, as we said before, his motto was—

"Let sects, and creeds, and parties fall,
And Jesus Christ be all in all."

It need scarcely be mentioned that the separation which he was now about to undergo between him and his deeply attached flock in Belfast, was of a painful nature. Many years of the most cordial intercourse and endearing connexion had, as it were, twined their hearts and affections into one. But Mr. Wilson was too faithful a follower of his Master to allow any circumstances, either of a loving or painful nature, to interfere with his proceedings when duty demanded. He believed that the mandate, "Go," had come ; and though it wrung his soul to leave his beloved congregation, whom he had ceased not to remember daily at a throne of grace, and anxiously watched over with all the care and attention of a parent for the space of nine years, he obeyed it.

The church, whose oversight he was now about to take, presented many different features from any which he had formerly entered upon, inasmuch as it had been in existence for a number of years, during which period it had enjoyed the ministry of several pastors, and still had a staff of office-bearers to manage its concerns. The charges which he had hitherto accepted were in their infancy, and required nursing and fostering to bring them to maturity ; but this one was merely paralyzed in its members, and only wanted the experienced physician to electrify them into activity. The localities were also widely different, as Belfast was the very hot-bed of Presbyterianism in the

North of Ireland, and Drogheda was, on the contrary, a hot-bed of Popery ; but in London, that great panorama of the habitable globe, whither he was now going, Presbyterianism was known, and that was all. Nor was this all, for it is acknowledged that a London audience is the most difficult to please in preaching, as it is generally composed of all sects and classes—from the votaries of literature to the shrewd and innate-talented mechanic and artisan, from the sceptical infidel to the hardened atheist, and from the newly-born child of God to the hoary-headed saint. These diversities and peculiar difficulties did present themselves to Mr. Wilson's mind before he accepted the call to London, and the very appearance of their magnitude and anomalous character made him hesitate about facing them ; and this was still more increased, when he considered the peculiar nature of the ministry in that great city. However, he knew that Christ was, and ought to be, the grand theme of the Christian ministry, and he resolved to make this his loudest note, and cry in the ears of all, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." With what success he did this, will hereafter be shown.

The *Banner of Ulster* thus notices his removal:

"On Tuesday last, the Rev. Josias Wilson resigned the charge of the congregation of Townsend Street into the hands of the Presbytery of Belfast, having accepted the call of the Free Scots Church, River Terrace, London. The congregation of

River Terrace has, we understand, been in existence about eleven years, and has erected a comfortable place of worship We confess we announce the departure of Mr. Wilson from Belfast with very great regret. He has been long known among us as one of our most popular preachers ; and, by his own exertion, he has succeeded in collecting in Townsend Street one of the largest congregations under the care of the General Assembly. As a pastor, he has been a model of ministerial zeal, and we have reason to believe that he has been instrumental in turning many to righteousness. We trust we shall be excused for adding, that Mrs. Wilson has proved herself ' an help-meet for him,' and that the people of Belfast will not forget her untiring benevolence. Mr. Wilson, we understand, preaches his farewell sermon to the congregation of Townsend Street Church on Sabbath next, and enters on his duties at River Terrace on the 20th inst., viz., October. We understand that the Ladies of the Belfast Missionary Work Association have presented Mrs. Wilson with a silver ink-stand, and a portfolio, as an expression of their esteem for her worth, and for her valuable aid in promoting their Association ''

CHAPTER VIII.

LABOURS IN LONDON UNTIL HIS DEATH IN 1847.

ACTUATED by such feelings and resolutions, he departed from Townsend Street Church and people, and arrived safely in London on the 16th October, 1844, where he was hospitably received by a kind friend, in whose house he and his family resided until a residence was procured for them, which was forthwith accomplished in Gibson Square, Islington. On the 20th of the same month he preached his first sermon in River Terrace, from these words—"Immediately, therefore, I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. *Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God,*" —Acts x. 33, last clause. This text was very appropriate, and he expounded it under feelings of the deepest solemnity. The few people who were present listened to it with marked attention. In eleven days afterwards, viz., 31st October, he was inducted by the London Presbytery. In this new and difficult undertaking he met with singular success. The machinery requisite for a church was all in operation—it only required polishing to remove its rust, that it might start into action. This

he speedily accomplished, using the "hammer of the Word" with a vigour and energy which soon scattered to the winds all the accumulated dust, and, by the unction given it from on High, the whole machinery was soon in motion.

The week after he came to London, the writer had occasion to be in town, and perceiving from the *Times* newspaper that Mr. Wilson had become the pastor of River Terrace Church, he bent his way thither on the following Sabbath, at the hour appointed for commencing worship. We entered the church and took our seat on the gallery, directly opposite the pulpit, and, with a sad heart, contemplated the all but deserted church. Dozens of pews together had not a single individual in them, and there were not more than two or three persons in any one of the seats. As to the gallery, it was all but empty, save that there were in the pews a few Sabbath-school children. It was very lamentable to hear the singing; a few voices joined in here and there, quite in a subdued tone, whilst the majority remained silent. Verily, thought we, Presbyterianism is at a sad discount here. These and similar reflections were passing through our minds when the singing ended, and our late friend said, in his usual impressive style, "Let us pray." He had not, however, proceeded far in his prayer, until we had forgotten all about the empty church and poor singing, for he had led our thoughts to more elevated subjects. This

Sabbath was the second of his pastorate in River Terrace, and, as a means of cementing in the bond of Christian love and charity pastor and people, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated. On this occasion he chose for his text these words—" He brought me into his banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love."

We shall have occasion to refer to this discourse hereafter, and therefore shall here only observe, that it was deep in pathos, brilliant in conception and language, perfectly calculated for the solemn occasion, and fitted to lead the affections heavenward. Its effects were very evident upon the hearers, and afterwards a larger number of communicants sat down to the feast than had done for some considerable time in this church, and we clearly perceived that there were mighty symptoms of a "shaking among the valley of dry bones." On the following Monday we called upon him, and during our conversation took occasion to observe, that we were much astonished to hear him preach such an excellent sermon on yesterday to so small a congregation. " Certainly," said he, " as to numbers it was a poor contrast to the hundreds and thousands which I have been accustomed to preach to ; and when I ascended the pulpit and saw so few present, and, in reading the psalm, heard my voice sound through the vacant seats, and reverberate from the bare walls, I then thought of the crowded congregation at that mo-

ment in Townsend Street, and I felt a peculiar chill come over me; but after I had prayed I felt greatly relieved, and I resolved, through the strength of the Spirit, to just preach as if it were my last sermon, for who knew but a Lydia might be there."

By the unwearied and diligent exercise of that singular combination of tact and talent, industry and perseverance, for which he was so conspicuous, the church soon presented a more cheering and plethoric constitution; and its former decay, under his judicious treatment, gave place to health, vigour, and activity. We shall here allow him to speak for himself; and we call upon our readers to attentively mark the changes which he had wrought in the church by this time:—

"2, GIBSON SQUARE, LONDON, 17*th Nov.*, 1844.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—I know your anxiety to hear of my progress and prospects in this place, and I have reason to be most thankful to the God of all goodness for the measure of success which has attended my poor labours since I came here. You are aware that before my arrival this church was reduced to the very lowest ebb. You were present, I have heard, at the communion that was held before I came, when sixty persons only partook of the blessed ordinance; and, on Sabbath fortnight, we had 102 communicants; and, if I am to judge from external appearances, I would say that to many it must have been a season of quickening and of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. You will be glad to hear that already above 100 sittings have been let, and the demand for them is brisk. The attendance on the Lord's-day is most cheering. The church is respectably filled in the lower

part, and on the gallery there are always a goodly number, and we hope that very soon there will not be a sitting to be let in the whole house. They have been in the habit of making collections monthly for the current expenses of the church—formerly they amounted to £4. Yesterday we made the usual monthly collection, and it amounted to about £15. In the evening of yesterday I was preaching a sermon to "young men and young women," and the church was exceedingly crowded, even the aisles were occupied. They are talking about an enlargement of the church. Thus far God has been pleased greatly to encourage me, and I confess that my most sanguine expectations, and the expectations of my friends, have been vastly exceeded. 'Not unto us, but to God be all the glory.' I am only putting on the harness in London. May I be enabled by the Holy Ghost to wear it humbly, faithfully, and prayerfully, and to do the Lord's work as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

"Ever yours, my dear brother, in all affection,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

It will be observed that this letter was written only twenty-seven days after he had come to River Terrace. Respecting the increase in the monthly collection, to which it alludes, we would remark, especially as it may be of use, that it did not depend so much upon the larger size of the congregation, as upon the manner in which it was collected. It is customary in England for the deacons or elders to stand at the door with a plate in their hand to receive the contributions of the people as they withdrew from the church. This had been the custom in River Terrace, and was practised for a Sabbath or two after Mr. Wilson came ; but he was astonished at the smallness of

the contributions, and proposed that they should carry the plate to each pew, as is done in Ireland and Scotland. The increase in the collection fully proved the efficiency of his plan, for, as he said, "People do not like to have a plate presented to them, and withhold giving; and if they will not willingly contribute of their substance for the support of religion, they must be induced by some means or other, and we all know that the Methodists are remarkable for their large collections, and they generally adopt this plan." Thus putting the question individually, How much do you intend to give?—instead of standing at the door like a statue, and allowing the people to crush past without noticing them or the plate either.

In three days after the date of the last letter, he writes:—

"2, Gibson Square, London, 21*st Nov.*, 1844.

"My very dear Friend,—I am happy to inform you that we are going on in River Terrace most prosperously. On last Lord's-day the church was better filled in the morning than on any former occasion, though there was no excitement; and in the evening we had a perfect bumper!—the whole house packed, and even the aisle occupied. But the best test of the acceptability of my poor labours is, that, since my installation, about 120 sittings have been let in the church. The accessions are from the English as well as the Scotch, and many of them highly respectable families, and well known in the district for their piety and zeal. The ladies of the congregation presented me, on last Tuesday, with a handsome pulpit gown and cassock, study chair and table. They had only intended to give me a gown and cassock, but the people

upon whom the ladies waited, who took the matter in hand, met with such cordial liberality, that they spent the surplus on the articles which I have named.

"Yours sincerely,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

One hundred and twenty sittings let in one month, that is at the rate of four each day! This is, no doubt, what he anticipated, and what made him give so characteristic a reply to the party who asked his opinion about having the church painted before he came to it—"Oh, let that alone," said he, "until I preach the gable out of it, and then you can paint the new and the old together."

"2, GIBSON SQUARE, LONDON, *4th Dec.*, 1844.

"MY DEAR FRIEND, ... The affairs of our church are in the most satisfactory state. God is most kind to me, and the people are everything which I could desire. have announced the second dispensation of the Lord's Supper to take place on the first Sabbath of February, and I have no doubt we shall have many new communicants.

"Yours ever,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

A little after this the writer again came to London, and, of course, made it a point to go and see how his friend was getting on in River Terrace; and never shall we forget the delightful and mighty alteration which had taken place in the church during our short absence of two months. We arrived at the church just as the service was commencing; but as to getting a seat in the body of

the church, one glimpse into it, over the heads of a number of people who were standing in the doorways, and who could not gain admittance, convinced us that that was impracticable. We next made for the gallery, but it was literally crammed; eventually we succeeded in squeezing in, and were obliged to stand during the whole service. And there stood our friend in the pulpit. He looked the very picture of contentment. A gleam of delight and satisfaction rested upon his animated countenance, which evidently pourtrayed the holy joy which burned within his soul. During the singing he occasionally ran his eyes over the mass of admiring people before him, as if delighted to behold them.

Prosperity still continued to attend the cause; and his hopes, respecting the additional number of communicants at the next celebration (viz., the second since he came), were nearly realized, as the following extract from a letter of his will prove :—

"2, GIBSON SQUARE, LONDON, 24*th Feb.*, 1845.

"MY DEAR FRIEND, ... You will be rejoiced to hear, I have no doubt, that God has been most gracious to me since I entered on my duties in River Terrace. The church was nearly empty when I came here, and now it is filled, often crowded, with a highly respectable, and, what is far better, with a most serious audience. There were only sixty communicants when I arrived, but at our last communion we had one hundred and sixty! London is awfully in want of pastors who will visit their flocks."

Is the secret of his successfulness to be attributed to his practising this in its widest latitude?

The congregation continued to increase very rapidly; so great, indeed, was the demand for pews and sittings, that, in about nine months, they were mostly all occupied, and the church, about June in the following year after his arrival, viz., 1845, became crowded almost to suffocation. Numbers, on the Sabbath evenings especially, could not gain admittance.

In less than twelve months he had not only fulfilled his promise respecting "preaching the gable out," but had actually doubly fulfilled it, for by this time it was found that he had preached both gables out of it, and an enlargement and rebuilding found to be necessary, and were set about in real earnest in the month of November, 1845.

As heretofore, the procuring of the funds necessary for the alterations and enlargement fell upon Mr. Wilson, and the subscription-book which he used on this occasion displays the same systematic construction as we have already noticed. As usual, he commences it himself by subscribing £50, and is followed by seven individuals, who each gives £50. One gentleman even contributes £100. The whole amount of contributions which he received for this purpose, according to his book, came to £1,191 7s.

The spirit of liberality which was poured out on the whole of the members of this church, after Mr.

Wilson came to it, was very great. Diodorus Siculus relates, " That the forests of the Pyranean mountains being set on fire, and the heat penetrating to the soil, a pure stream of silver gushed forth from the bosom of the earth, and revealed, for the first time, those rich lodes afterwards so celebrated." Dr. Harris says, " This is emblematical of the melting influence of the cross ; only let the fire of the Gospel be kindled in the Church, and its ample stores will soon be seen flowing forth from their hidden source, and becoming the fine gold of the sanctuary." This is, we presume, an excellent test, whereby we can easily judge whether a church is in a flourishing condition or not. Give us a list of the subscriptions which are annually raised by the members of a church for the various purposes of religion ; and, after taking into consideration their social position, we will venture to affirm, that we shall be able to tell what sort of a minister occupies its pulpit. In the apostolic ages of the Christian church, when the Gospel was faithfully and powerfully proclaimed, by men whose heart and soul was in it, we are told " that as many as were possessed of lands or houses sold them, and brought the price of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." During the enlargement of the church, the congregation worshipped in the British School-rooms, Denmark Street. Crowds

attended his ministry here, and after the church was re-opened, numbers from this district, who had not been in the habit of attending any place of worship, joined the church, merely from hearing him preach in the school-room.

When Mr. Wilson came to River Terrace, there was no school-room attached to the church, but during the alteration, this desideratum was remedied, as a large school-room, capable of containing some hundreds of children was formed, principally under the church, and it really makes a very excellent and commodious school-room. The committee also procured the adjoining house to the church in River Terrace, as a residence for Mr. Wilson.

A few days after the re-opening of the church, Mr. Wilson writes as follows to his esteemed friend Mrs. M'Cron, of Drogheda :—

"PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, RIVER TERRACE,
LONDON, 31*st March*, 1849.

"MY EVER DEAR FRIEND, ... I would have answered your letter at once, but, when it arrived, I was in the midst of a bustle in connexion with the re-opening of my church. We have been enlarging it for the last four months. During that time I have been preaching in a large school-room, and we re-opened it on the 18th inst., with a great flourish of drums and trumpets. The Rev. James Hamilton, of Regent Street, and the Rev. Dr. Burder, of Hackney, and your humble servant, officiated on the occasion.* We have

* Mr. Wilson's text was from John xix. and 14.

added 400 SITTINGS to the church, at an expense of £1,600; and I am happy to say that, by the noble spirit of liberality displayed on the occasion of re-opening, and by a vigorous and united effort made by the members within the last three or four days, *every penny of debt* incurred by the enlargement will be wiped off!

"This is cheering to me, to see such a fine spirit on such an occasion. The church has been very much crowded since we re-opened it, and upwards of one hundred new members have been added to the congregation since. We are quite well, but in sad confusion, as we have removed into a new house taken by the committee, next door to the church; so I am located now as I was in Drogheda and Belfast.

"Ever yours,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

He and Mrs. Wilson established several philanthropic and benevolent societies in connexion with the church. In fact, its organization for promoting good is perhaps one of the most perfect in London.

During his short connexion with the church, *which was only two years and a half, there were* 942 *seatholders added, making in all* 1,063; *and at the last sacrament which he was permitted to dispense, there were* 327 *communicants, thus showing an increase during his ministry of* 267 *communicants.* When we consider that all these mighty and glorious results were effected in so short a period, it certainly is astonishing, and proves very distinctly that his ministry and labours were of no ordinary nature, indeed almost apostolical. In the annals of modern Presbyterianism, either in London or

England, it would be utterly impossible to find another such revival within its pale. As heretofore, his labours were not confined to his own church and people; although he found them like infants, which require continual watching and nursing, he would occasionally leave them for a little, and take a run into the provinces. These visits were productive of much good, as the following letter from the Rev. Dr. Bryson, of Wolverhampton, will testify:—

"I can state, with certainty, that both before and since my coming to Wolverhampton, he ceased not till the day of his strength had well nigh departed, to aid both myself and my infant congregation—now with his ministerial service, now with his affectionate counselling. It was he who made the appointment of the Presbytery of London, and, in conjunction with a brother minister from the Presbyterian Church of Ireland, formed the few adherents of Presbyterianism here into a church. It was he who preached at my ordination, and ordained me; and it was he who aided me in opening our present place of worship. His visits to Wolverhampton on these, and other occasions, were always hailed with joy and thankfulness."

In whatever station he occupied since his entering upon the ministry, his labours were very abundant. There was no relaxation for him, for as soon as he got one church in working order, he was almost directly called from it to commence the building up of another. This of necessity entailed upon him great corporeal and mental labour, and much anxiety of mind, which proved

more than his physical system could bear. However, from his severe illness in Belfast, which we have mentioned, until the summer of 1847, he enjoyed uninterrupted health. During this period he observed a strict temperance, and milk constituted a chief part of his diet. Since he came to London he had no sickness until the month of July, 1846. This summer was exceedingly hot, and he had a sharp attack of English cholera. In a letter to a friend, he alludes to this as follows :—

"9, River Terrace, *Monday*, 1847.

"My dear Friend,—I am only rising from a violent attack of British cholera. I have been prostrated by it for nearly a fortnight, and was, on last Lord's day, out of my own pulpit. Within the last ten days we have had 140 deaths by the same complaint. I was truly brought very low ; but I have to sing a song of praise to my dear Lord, I am now nearly well. I went through all my sacramental services yesterday, both morning and evening, and was much benefited by the exercise. *A good pulpit perspiration is an excellent medicine.*"

Like the loving Israelite, though his pains were most severe, he could both sing of, and remember his Zion; and hence, in the conclusion of this letter, he recurs to that ever-delightful topic of his, viz., his church and people, and he says :—

"You will be glad to hear that my church affairs are in a very comfortable state. We have now about 430 families connected with us, though there were only sixty families when I came here. God has been most gracious and kind."

After his recovery he was urged to take a com-

plete change, and relaxation from all duty, but his attachment* to his people was so strong, that he would only consent to go as far as Gravesend, in order that he might be enabled to fill his own pulpit on Sabbaths and Wednesday evenings. He remained at Gravesend all the month of September, and enjoyed it very much, though, at times, he suffered much pain. A treat of tea and cake was given to the Sabbath-school children in River Terrace School-room on Christmas morning. The spacious apartment was filled with parents, spectators, and children. Mr. Wilson was quite in his element, and the manner in which he distributed the cake to the children, in large pieces, elicited the attention of all, and created quite an amusement. It was not in his nature to do things by halves, and this free and plentiful distribution of the staff of bread was only emblematical of the manner in which he urged all men to partake of the "bread of life."

Had he not exercised the greatest temperance during his life in London, perhaps, in cor-

* The following anecdote, which occurred when he was in Drogheda, will prove this:—One evening, soon after his new church was completed, he and Mrs. Wilson were spending the evening with some friends, and when they were returning home, the moon shot from behind a cloud, and darted her silvery rays upon the church, which displayed it fully to their view. Mr. Wilson stopped, and gazed upon the building with great delight, and talked with rapturous feeling about his church and people. Mrs. Wilson, in a jocular manner, observed—"I really do think, Josias, that you love your church and people more than me." He instantly replied, "And so I ought, Mary, because I was first married to them."

tain instances, to a fault, we are convinced that London would have proved fatal to him before it did. His sensitive nature was not at all suited to stand the excitement and bustle of the metropolis, nor to witness its awful scenes of misery and distress.

However, be this as it may, towards the end of the year, his physical energies began to wane, and, even before this, several of his friends noticed a change in his appearance, and thought that they saw indications of a breaking-up of the system, and that disease, with its trident and tenacious fangs, had laid hold of him.

A short time before his last illness, a lady met him, and observed that he walked as if he were tired; and, on coming up to him, said, "You do not look well, are you ill? I am afraid that you are working too much." He paused, and replied—"It may be so, but there is no rest here; that can only be obtained yonder," pointing to the skies. Mr. Wilson was not a person that made mountains of mole-hills, and we are convinced that he often ascended the pulpit when the sofa would have been more suitable. He believed "that a good pulpit perspiration was an excellent medicine;" but we believe that, like every other good thing, when intemperately used, it is injurious, and we are quite certain that Mr. Wilson had too many of those saline baths to live to a "good old age."

CHAPTER IX.

HIS ILLNESS AND DEATH IN 1847.

HITHERTO our minds have been cheered by the narration of the many pleasing acts of his useful and busy life, but we now come to a most painful and melancholy event, namely, his last fatal illness and death, and we could heartily wish that this part of the narrative were committed to other hands than ours. However, as we have journeyed with him thus far, and have been delighted with his company, and cheered on our pilgrimage by his peculiarly pleasing society and heavenly conversation, we will not forsake him in his hours of suffering and sorrow, nor shrink from hearing his expiring groans, and beholding his faith as he triumphantly passes through the "swelling waves of Jordan" to the shores of happy Canaan; and, were we permitted, we could even follow him further, and listen with delight to the seraphic acclamation which greeted and welcomed him on yonder shore. But here our discipleship must terminate, and fancy, with her magic wings, give place to an animating anticipation of that glorious period when we

"Shall meet to part no more."

We have seen that he had sufficiently rallied from his attack of English cholera, so as to enable him to prosecute his duties, and we find him in his own pulpit on the first Sabbath of the new year, 1847. On this occasion he conducted the services in his usual pleasing and happy manner ; and, when the preliminary devotional services were ended, he commenced by stating, that as this was the season for making presents to friends, and *wishing* each other many happy returns, he was going to give them a *wish*, and he then gave out the text, which, he said, contained the *wish* he meant, viz., "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." From these words he preached a most appropriate and excellent sermon. In the evening, he said, that in the morning he had given them a *wish ;* he would now give them a *resolution*, viz., "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Both these discourses made a deep impression upon the audience.

Although, from his manner in the pulpit, and the animating nature of his actions and language on this occasion, no one would have supposed that there was anything the matter with him, still disease was at work ; and though for a time comparatively quiet, yet this stillness was only like the calm which precedes the destructive tornado, for in a short time afterwards it broke out in all its fury, and speedily prostrated him. He was en-

gaged to open the Rev. Dr. Bryson's Church in Wolverhampton, on the 24th of January, and from the following letter it will be seen that he was suffering very acute pain at this time :—

"WOLVERHAMPTON, 10*th June*, 1847

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—You are doubtless aware that, previous to the 24th of January, 1847—the day on which this church was opened—Mr. Wilson had been complaining of the state of his health. Indeed, he seemed so ill when he joined me, on the evening of the 23d, that I almost wished it were in my power to dispense with his services on the following day. Happily, however, with the dawn of the Sabbath came also to him rest in body as well as in mind, and about ten o'clock we made our way together to the church, under one of those heavy showers which our smoky atmosphere sometimes sends us. The unfavourable circumstance gave rise to very gloomy apprehensions on my own part as to the magnitude of the congregation likely to assemble. 'Do not despond, my dear friend,' said my companion, 'for if you have no more than six souls with you, and Christ in the midst, you shall have a large congregation.' This was both a timeous and just reply, and often has its simple remembrance swelled out before me a handful of people into the importance of a houseful. His public ministrations on this interesting occasion were excellent—equally distinguished for ability and his wonted earnestness. The afternoon sermon was a rare specimen of effective pulpit oratory. Perhaps I write under partiality to the memory of my departed friend, as well as certain preconceptions of what preaching ought to be ; but I hesitate not to think that, had the greatest theologian in the Westminster Assembly, and the mightiest spirit in the Long Parliament been present, the one would have been charmed with the lucid exposition of Scriptural doctrine, and the other with the forcible eloquence by which it was set forth. I fear that his exertions on this

day helped in no slight degree to augment his previous illness, and, owing to some injudicious medicine which he took on retiring to bed, he suffered, to give his own words, 'the most excruciating pain during the whole of the night.' He was engaged to be present at the laying the foundation-stone of the new Presbyterian Church in the neighbouring town of Dudley, on Tuesday the 26th, but was compelled, from his unabated indisposition, to return to London. How little did I think that Wolverhampton was to remain in the ages of posterity as the last scene of his efforts in church extension.

"Yours truly,

"JOHN BRYSON."

After this he returned home, and, on the following Thursday, the 28th January, he was to have taken the chair at a meeting in the London Tavern, for the Home Mission; but he felt so poorly he could not attend. Mr. Semple, surgeon, was called in, and, by his judicious treatment, he was enabled to preach on the following Sabbath. His duties on this day were of an arduous and solemn nature. Besides his usual exercises, he ordained three new elders in the church, explained the polity of the Presbyterian Church, and went through the whole of the ordination services with much clearness and solemnity. After the services were ended, he gave tokens to a great number of communicants, as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be dispensed on the following Sabbath. This was the last opportunity which many of the people had of shak-

ing hands with him, and they look back to it with intense interest.

Several of his friends saw, although he would not acknowledge it, that he was really very unwell, and they did all in their power to persuade him not to preach in the evening, but to no avail; and when the hour came for commencing worship, he was in the pulpit. This happened to be *his last* sermon, and the text was from Luke, 2d chapter, 29th and 30th verses—" Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." From these words he preached a thrilling discourse; and, from their appropriate nature, we might almost fancy that he knew that his end was nigh, and looked upon the occasion as a solemn one. On this night he slept very little; but this was thought nothing strange, as he generally had very restless Sabbath nights, owing to his excitement during the day. On the following morning, his eyes appeared *yellow*, and in the evening he was seized with violent pain in the stomach. The doctor was sent for at twelve o'clock, and, through the means which were had recourse to, he was much better in the morning. On the Wednesday he was again taken ill, and a physician was now called in. The following week he continued to improve, and for some time progressed favourably, so that both he and his friends believed that he would be again restored to health. But, alas! it was otherwise ordained.

"Fond man! the vision of a moment made—
Dream of a dream and shadow of a shade!"

At this period he wrote to several friends.—The following letter is addressed to Miss Carlile:—

"River Terrace, Islington, *Feb.* 17, 1817

"My very dear Sister, ... I trust that I may say that I am quite convalescent. The attack has been a keen and severe one, but it was sent in infinite love and wisdom, and when my pains were most severe, one glimpse of Gethsemane, or Calvary, made me feel my trial as nothing. O for a realizing faith, a spirit of lively gratitude and ardent love! Give my affectionate regards to all the family.

"Ever your affectionate brother,

"Josias Wilson."

The commencement of this letter is occupied in pouring consolation into Miss Carlile's bosom, on account of her bereavement in the death of her sister. On the same day, he wrote to the writer as follows:—

"River Terrace, *Feb.* 17, 1817.

"My dear Doctor,—I suppose you have not heard that I am just crawling out of a bed of affliction. It has pleased my Heavenly Father to visit me with a violent attack of my liver, accompanied by jaundice. I have been laid up for three weeks, but I have to bless God that the disease is giving way, and my medical attendants say that I am convalescent, and I feel it is so. Certainly I have suffered for the last three weeks much acute suffering, but I have, at the same time, felt that it was all sent in mercy and love. To-day and yesterday I have got down stairs, and feel that I am getting a very voracious appetite. Mrs. Wilson had been a good deal

knocked up by this business, but she is now quite well. Let me hear from you. We all unite in affectionate wishes to you and dear Mrs. Hastings. I have not heard for a long time from you. Give me a long letter, anything that will interest you will be interesting to me.

"Your sincere friend,

"JOSIAS WILSON.

"Dr. Hastings."

The above letters breathe the genuine spirit of a Christian under the chastening rod of a gracious God. At this time he entertained great hopes of his recovery, and went into the church on the two following Sabbaths. On the first, he addressed the people, and became very warm and animated in his discourse, and, after he had done, he said, "that he felt quite able to preach, only his medical adviser would not allow him."

On the next Sabbath, the Rev. Mr. Muirhead preached in River Terrace, before his departure as a Missionary to China for the London Missionary Society. After sermon, Mr. Wilson ascended the pulpit, gave a short address, and, by prayer, commended Mr. Muirhead to God's protection. *This was his last appearance in the pulpit.* He looked very ill, and many of the congregation were overcome at seeing him. He was quite jaundiced.

On writing to a friend after this, he alludes to these two Sabbaths, as follow :—

"RIVER TERRACE, *March* 4, 1817.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—This is the fifth week that I have been

confined to the house. On Sabbath week (21st February) I got out to the morning service, and conducted the devotional exercises, and on last Lord's-day (28th February) I was out at both diets. Next Sabbath I hope to preach a short sermon.

"Yours sincerely,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

On the same date as the above he wrote to the writer. The following is an extract from his letter :—

"I feel better to-day, notwithstanding all that your brethren, my tormentors, are doing to keep me down. I feel myself elastic this morning, and fancy I could preach half-an-hour without receiving any injury"

But, unfortunately, this was only like the momentary brightness of the expiring lamp, for on the Monday after his last appearance he became very ill, and continued getting worse. All hopes of eventually recovering seem to have now forsaken him, and his spirits began to sink under the direful agony which he was suffering.

He had promised to visit the Rev. William Wilson, of Dublin, this spring, and was looking forward to that period with great delight, but on the 15th March, 1847, he says :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—I deeply regret that I must relinquish the idea of visiting you in Dublin. My complaint still continues, and my bodily strength is much reduced. Under these circumstances, it seems unwise for me to retain any engagements from which I can possibly escape. I am thus deprived of what would have been to me a source of much enjoyment."

Soon after he came to London, his fame for activity and usefulness reached the ears of the London Missionary Society, and he was proposed a DIRECTOR by the Home Secretary, and was elected. But his connexion with it was of short duration, for, about the same date as the above, he wrote to the Directors as follows :—

"My medical advisers say that my liver is considerably affected, and that I must give up all possible engagements. *Since I came to London I now find that I have been working far beyond my strength.* I therefore fear that I must request you to have my *name* removed from the Directory of the Society, as I do not *think it right that my name* should be there, when I feel myself unable to give that regular attendance which is essentially necessary in such a great institution."

After his death, the Secretary expressed his esteem of his usefulness as follows :—

"From the character of his mind and the disposition of his heart, he soon evinced his capabilities for promoting the interests of the Society, alike in the internal workings of its committees at the Mission-house, and at its anniversaries both in the metropolis and in the provinces.

"The friends of the Society have in the most grateful recollection the important services which he rendered, by the powerful address which he delivered at Exeter Hall in 1845, also by his visits, his conversation, his addresses, and his discourses, delivered before the largest and most effective auxiliaries at Hull, Birmingham, Southampton, Brighton, &c.

His note to the London Missionary Society is quite characteristic of the man. About a fortnight before his death, while driving through

one of the crowded thoroughfares of London, he looked out of the carriage-window, and, on perceiving the crowds in the street, he exclaimed, "Oh, I see the world can do without me!" Had we been present when he uttered these words, we would have said, that what the world wanted was some thousands like him. He had been able every day to come down stairs, until Friday, the 2d of April, which was the last day he was able to get down; after this he was confined to his bed. About this time an incident occurred which it may be well to relate, as it exhibits his kind spirit, and shows that he never forgot former friends. A woman called, wishing to see him particularly, Mrs. Wilson feared that he would not be able to receive her, owing to his weakness; but when the circumstance was mentioned to him, he said that he would not refuse her. The woman turned out to be a person from Drogheda, who, when she was a little girl, had attended his school there. She was now a married woman, and he well recollected that, on the morning of his departure from Drogheda to Belfast, this woman—then a little girl—came up to the coach, and presented him with a pen-knife, as a parting memorial.

Notwithstanding the excruciating nature of his suffering, he always took a great interest in the affairs of his church, and even procured the supplies for the Sabbaths and Wednesday evenings.

On the 6th of April, the Rev. Mr. Ferguson

called with the Presbytery book, for Mr. Wilson to sign, he being Moderator, and he sat up in bed, and, with a firm hand, signed all the documents, which occupied him about fifteen minutes.

On Thursday, the 8th, he was getting his hair cut, and although he was exceedingly weak, and in great pain, he earnestly exhorted the hair-dresser to attend to the concerns of his soul.

On the following Saturday evening his symptoms became very alarming ; hiccup came on, and about the middle of the night it became very violent. His physician and surgeon were sent for, and it was now thought advisable to call in another physician. It was very evident that they entertained no hopes of his recovery. Brandy and nourishment were ordered, and he took it for some time, but at last said, that his poor stomach could stand it no longer.

On Sabbath evening, that cruel wrecker of the sick-man's frame, hiccup, came on more severe than ever. Mr. Semple, his surgeon, came in about nine o'clock, and Mr. Wilson said, with all his usual ardour, " Doctor, is there nothing in all London that can allay this hiccup ?" Mr. Semple said, " If there is, Mr. Wilson, it will be procured for you." What a trying and painful moment must that have been to Mr. Semple. None but those to whom such appeals have been made, by their tempest-tossed and suffering fellow-mortals, can

have any idea of the pang of grief which must have occupied Mr. S.'s bosom, as he stood gazing upon the agonizing and deathly tortures of his dear friend—heard his faultering and convulsive voice implore relief, and felt certain that none could be obtained, as "art had done its all."

The guarded and doubtful reply of Mr. Semple threw Mr. Wilson into a sort of stupor, and the bystanders thought he was dying; but he presently recovered, and then spoke of death as being very near. On this night Mr. and Mrs. B., and Mr. P., came to attend upon him, and continued with him until he departed this life. About ten o'clock, Mrs. B. and Miss Wilson, now Mrs. S. Begg, sang the twenty-third psalm. He joined in with all his heart and strength. After they had finished it, some one came into the room, and he turned round and said, "You have lost a great treat." About twelve o'clock, same night, Mr. Carlile, from Brixton, came to see him. Mr. Wilson said, "I am sorry that you have been brought over at this late hour." He then requested him to get paper and ink, as he wished to make a settlement of his worldly affairs, and he dictated to Mr. Carlile with the greatest precision. During this evening he said to Mrs. Wilson, that, on a Sabbath evening or two ago, when they were all in church, he thought it right to see how his soul stood with his God, as he felt his disease to be of a very

serious nature; and he told her that he had had a most precious time—that he had such views of Christ that had supported and sustained him ever since—and that he had been covenanting with his God. He then told her that she would get a covenant in his dressing-case, that he had made ten years ago.*

Sleep forsook him during all this night, and when he saw daylight, he expressed much thankfulness to God for bringing him through the night without pain. On the following Monday he wished to see the Rev. James Hamilton, and he was immediately with him, and describes the interview as follows:—

"During the three months of his last sickness, I had never seen him; but, on the last Monday morning of his life, obedient to the message of a friend, I hastened to his chamber. Feeble and worn as the body was, the mind was fresh and clear; and, whilst the light of his sunniest days sometimes sparkled in his eye, his words were singularly distinct and deliberate. He told me—'I am resting on Christ, and I find Him sufficient;' and he added—'At communion and other seasons, I have felt more rapturous emotion than at any time during this sickness; I have sometimes known what it was to be ravished with Christ's love, but I feel that He is with me.' Speaking of his experience, he said—'To me it is a nail fastened in a sure place, that passage—'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord.' For long I feel that the Lord has been drawing me away from all that is unrighteous and unholy, and drawing me towards all that is Christ-like; and, as

* See his labours in Belfast.

I feel that He has been doing this in me, I have no doubt of what He has done for me—'And He will have mercy upon him, and our God will abundantly pardon.' And, even during this attack, He has done more in the way of drawing me to Himself than in any former illness. I have an ardent and impetuous spirit, and used to be impatient and hasty, but the Lord has at length given me a weaned spirit.' He then took an affecting review of his twenty-six years in the ministry. Feeling that his work was done, it evidently comforted him to think that his labour had not been all in vain. 'The Lord gave me souls in Drogheda, and He gave me souls in Townsend Street. I began at a little place called Tassagh, and, though a great deal of it must have been sad stuff, yet the Gospel was in it, and my heart was in it, and the old women of Tassagh looked up to their young minister as if he had been an angel from heaven.' As he said this, a quaint smile twinkled from his eye. Then, with great solemnity, he reverted to his labours here. 'Though many motives would mingle with it, the great desire of my ministry was that Christ should be exalted; and, though I do not know many cases of conversion here, yet we have had blessed seasons in that house,' turning his face towards it, as if he were looking into it. 'There have been Sabbath evenings, especially, when the Lord was assuredly with us.'"

Mrs. Wilson says:—

"I shall never forget this interview. They both spoke in a calm and cheerful manner, just like two travellers going to the same country, only one was going a little before the other, each having a pleasing smile on his countenance."

After his interview with Mr. Hamilton, he then requested to see his elders, and, at eleven o'clock in the morning, they attended obedient to his wishes. "When they entered the room, a scene

took place which it is difficult fully to describe. It was affectingly solemn and instructive, and will scarcely ever be forgotten by those who were present. It seemed to be hallowed ground upon which they were treading; they found themselves to be not only by the couch of a dying man, but by that of a dying Christian, and of one who was evidencing the triumph and strength-giving grace of faith in the dying hour. He was calm and composed, while, at the same time, a beam of cheerfulness and welcome darted from his eyes as his elders entered, and the greeting was most affectionate. The warm heart of the pastor was seen while the somewhat emaciated hand was stretched out to the eager grasp of each of them. The persons present were his elders, eight in number, his sorrowing wife and daughter, and three or four of his most intimate friends. It was a touching scene, a moment to be remembered—all were in tears. One of his elders ventured to say to him, 'Let not your heart be troubled.' 'No, dear friend,' said he, 'my heart is not troubled, but I wanted to see you; I wished to have some conversation with you, and I am glad you are come. I have always had pleasure in meeting with you, you have ever been very kind to me! At this time one of the elders entered the room weeping aloud. Mr. Wilson's ear caught the sound, and, motioning with his hand, said, with peculiar kindness—

'Come here, my brother, sit down ; you have had a long walk ; you must feel fatigued :' and then proceeded, 'I have endeavoured, as far as God has enabled me, to preach the Gospel. It has been my study to make known the great doctrines of the fall of man, of regenerating grace, of justification by faith, of adoption into God's family, of sanctification. This has been done in weakness, for I am a poor, weak, erring creature ; yet God has honoured me in my work, first in Drogheda, where I had some souls given me ; then in Belfast. I received there much of God's favour and support. Three of my Belfast elders are now in heaven, where I also hope to be. It is better to go than to stay. And now in River Terrace some proofs have been afforded me of the usefulness of my ministry, yet not mine, what has been done was all the Lord's doing—all.' Here Mrs. Wilson, fearing he might become exhausted, cried out, 'O Josias!' when he said with sweet composure, 'Do not, Mary, dearest, I feel quite able.' At other times his daughter and a lady refreshed him with something to wet his lips, and he said, 'Oh, you are all so kind—so kind.' His energy of mind, however, did not fail him He said, 'All my discourses were the result of previous study. They may not have been alike useful ; I was not at all times equally fitted for study ; but this I may say, my great object was to let down the net of the Gospel—to win souls.

I now reflect with satisfaction upon the doctrines* and morality proclaimed in them, and hope the minds of my people may be influenced by them when I am silent. I had great delight in my work among you here, and, next to my own family, my people are nearest to my heart. The Lord has been dealing graciously with me ; I have seen His hand stretched down to this bed on which I lie. The cause of this illness is not of recent date, I think it must have commenced two years ago. I have had other illnesses, and they have had their effects upon me ; but now I feel as though all was melting down, the remaining dross that was clinging to me is now being fused in the furnace, my heart-strings are melting away. I now abhor everything Christless, everything unholy, and feel that I can only live in the church above—in heaven.'

"'I think, brethren, if God should now lay me aside, you should, as speedily as you can, fill up the gap which will be made. This was done in Belfast. I had scarcely left Townsend Street before my people there were provided with a faithful minister. I could say more on this subject, and, if you desire it, I will see one or two of you another time. Your present prosperity renders your duty somewhat more difficult, perhaps. I have no desire to dictate ; but I think you should

* The Editor knows this to be a fact.

at once look out for a man of God—one of standing in the Church—and who would be acceptable to the people, and that without delay, that the congregation do not scatter.'

"He then invited those present, if they had anything on their minds, to speak to him. One of the elders expressed a hope that, having seen them, he would be able to cast all his cares away; and reminded him of that precious promise, 'He that believeth on me shall never die.' He afterwards remarked, with some animation, 'There, now, my friends thought this meeting would be too much for me, but it is delightful; see how mercifully the Lord has dealt with me. I have had no attack of hiccup since you came in.'

"'Ah, I have been an unworthy servant of Christ, and done but little for His cause; but there were several plans which I, with some of the brethren, had laid out, which, I trust, will soon be carried into effect.'

"An elder was then invited by him to engage in prayer, after which he took affectionate leave, embracing each of them, and commending them to the Lord."

During the whole of this interview he remained perfectly calm and tranquil—not in the least agitated. Soon after, he fell asleep, which raised the hopes of his sorrowing friends that his life might yet be prolonged; but he soon awoke, and hiccup again seized him. He had a short respite

from acute suffering, and he looked to Mrs. Wilson, with a sweet smile upon his countenance, and said, "I am better—Christ is precious!" The twenty-third Psalm was then repeated; and after the words

"Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,"

He exclaimed, "It is not a dark vale," though at this time his bodily sufferings were great. How could it be dark? Christ was with him, and He is *light*. Though disease was grinding his tabernacle into dust, and the "swelling waves of Jordan" appearing in the distance, his soul was not perplexed or disquieted, but, like the weary pilgrim at the end of his journey, he delighted to sing of the glories of that land whither he was hastening, and pointed several hymns to be read to him, viz.:—

"We have no abiding city here,"
&c., &c., &c.

"Jesus is gone up on high,"
&c., &c., &c.

"Rock of Ages cleft for me,"
&c., &c, &c.

When sitting up, for a moment, he said, with much solemnity, "When we consider our privileges, compared with the heathen, our sins are brought out in bold relief."

After this, he was in his arm-chair. Mrs.

Wilson was holding his head, and Miss Wilson his right hand; he lifted up his left hand to heaven, and offered up a most fervent prayer for them, saying—"Holy Jesus! keep these two precious ones!"

Every hour, it was observed, was bringing his mind more heaven-ward, and his meditations were frequently fixed upon Christ's sufferings on the cross, in the garden of Gethsemane, and His triumphant resurrection from the dead. When his sufferings were greatest, he did not complain.

"'Tis magnanimity to hide the wound."

On these occasions of periodical paroxysms of agony, he would say, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." On this day he frequently took Mrs. Wilson and his daughter in his arms and embraced them. To the former he said, "Mary, I have no fear of you; the Lord will take care of you: you have been to me a faithful wife. I would have been a poor wretch without you." To the latter, he said, "My dear, love your Bible; never neglect prayer, morning and evening; never be proud of your person, for what is it all worth—see what I am now, all skin and bone! Love your God, and He will take care of you."

Afterwards he repeated the 7th verse of the 55th chapter of Isaiah—"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his

thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." He said, "That he had realised the first part, and the second was in progress. Oh, no; I could not live with the unrighteous. I could not live with sinners. If it had been the Lord's will I should have liked to remain a little longer among you, for I loved my congregation. I am relying upon no righteousness of my own, but solely upon the sanctifying agency of the Spirit to cleanse from sin and all corruption. Here his thoughts winged their flight to heaven, and he talked quite cheerfully of meeting with his father and mother, and many other dear friends, in that glorious country whither his thoughts and aspirations now tended.

At another time, he said "That he has preached four sermons on the Holy Spirit, and if he had been spared he intended to have preached a fifth on the 'Spirit as breath.'" A friend was holding his head, and he said, "Christ had no one to hold His head—no, they all fell asleep! How often have I sinned against that Holy Jesus; but, praised be God, His blood cleanseth from all sin." He then repeated the following hymn:—

"There is a fountain filled with blood
Flows from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And there may I, as well as he,
Wash all my sins away."

On the night before his death, when several friends were surrounding his bed, he began by saying that there was another thing about which he was anxious to speak. "At one time I had a great desire to be buried beside my father and mother in Ireland, but that desire has gone." He then turned round, and, in great composure of spirit, said, "Mary," addressing his wife, who was sitting by his bed-side, absorbed in sorrow, "what would you think of Norwood?* perhaps it is too far off, as I think many of my congregation will like to visit my grave." He then asked a friend, Mr. ———, "Where is your burying-place?" He told him; but said that it would not do, as the burial service of the Church would have to be read. Mr. Wilson paused for a little, and then said, "I am *no bigot*, but I would not like to have my own brethren shut out." Truly may we exclaim—

"A death-bed's a detector of the human heart!"

"Some time ago," said he, "I was at a funeral in Bunhill Fields, and, in passing the grave of Dr. Waugh, I thought there was a vacant place by his side, and I had a desire to be buried there; and

* This is the burying-ground of Mr. Carlile, Mrs. Wilson's brother.

the idea struck me what a happy sight it would be on the resurrection morn, when bursting from the tomb, to see the happy face of Dr. Waugh," and then, with a sweet smile resting upon his countenance, said, "You see I carry MY SOCIAL FEELINGS TO THE GRAVE." An individual present remarked that there was no likelihood of getting a place there, as it was already crowded. Mr. Wilson said, "Oh, I do not mind." Highgate was then proposed, and he turned round to Mrs. Wilson and said, "Mary, what do you think?" but she was so overwhelmed with grief that she could not recollect where the cemetery was. Mr. Wilson then said, "Mary, dear, do not you recollect the day you and I rode up to Highgate, when I was recovering from my illness, and we rested on the grass?" Mrs. Wilson said she did recollect it, and he then added, "It is only a few minutes walk thence." It was amazing to witness his composure and resignation of soul during this solemn scene. His God sustained him, and he fully realised the truth of that Scripture, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee; when thou walketh through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

Such scenes as these manifest the triumphant power of the Christian religion, and add a lustre,

a glory, and a dignity to it, which might well crimson the cheeks of its adversaries. On it

> " We gaze, we weep mixed tears of grief and joy.
> Amazement strikes ; devotion bursts to flame ;
> Christians adore, and infidels believe."

During the whole of this night he had no rest. He occasionally sat up in his arm-chair, and even was able to walk about with a little assistance. Passages of Scripture and hymns were frequently repeated to him. At one time Mrs. Wilson was saying that beautiful verse of a hymn already quoted :—

> " Hide me—O my Saviour hide,
> Till the storm of life is past ;
> Safe into the haven guide—
> O receive my soul at last. '

She paused, and he, with much ardour, said, " Go on"—and listened with deep attention to the following verse :—

> " Other refuge have I none
> Hangs my helpless soul on thee ;
> Leave, ah leave me not alone—
> Still support and comfort me."

On Tuesday, the day of his death, his sufferings were very great. He had constant hiccup, accompanied with violent sickness, and he was heard to say, " This is a purging from sense and sin ;" and at another time, " I freely believe and trust that

Christ is willing to receive me. I am almost inclined to say, 'Why are His chariot wheels so long in coming.'" About this time one of his nieces came into the room, and he held out his hand and said, "The Lord bless you, and make you a rich blessing."

About an hour before his death, Mrs. Wilson repeated to him these words—"Our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." He looked up, and said, with great emphasis, "True, quite true. I am happy." Although his pains were very acute, he remained perfectly sensible—his faculties not at all impaired. He frequently inquired what hour it was, as he expected to see the doctors about half-past four, and he became anxious to know from them how long his sufferings were likely to continue, and when he would be released. About half an hour before his death two of his nieces came into the room, whom he had not seen for some time. He shook hands with them. To one he said, "I am glad to see you;" and to the other, "I am delighted to see you; but I am not able to say more to you." When the doctors' carriage stopped at the door he knew it, and exclaimed, "Oh, there are the doctors." And when they came into his room, he asked the ladies to retire. He then said to the doctors—"Oh, I have suffered intensely for the last forty-eight hours; but, Mary, (addressing Mrs. Wilson, who remained

in the room), tell them what I have suffered." She was in the act of doing so, when he said, with great ardour, " Will it be long ?" The physician said, " No, Sir, it will not be long." He again repeated the question in a more forcible and minute manner, evidently anxious to be released. " How long will it be ; one hour or two? for I have a great desire to depart and be with Christ." The doctors retired to consult and form an answer to his urgent inquiries. During their absence, he said that he wished to be lifted up a little. His soul, about to abandon its tottering tabernacle, summoned all its strength, and called into existence its remaining efforts. The loving husband, the esteemed and affectionate father, and the faithful minister, by the assistance of his two kind friends (who had remained with him for the last two days and nights), gently tried to raise himself, but in the attempt he threw himself back. At this moment the doctors entered. He wished to speak ; wished to utter some sentence ; the lips were seen to quiver, but the tongue refused to articulate his last prayer. " The bowl was broken ;" " the silver cords loosed." Ebbing Nature heaved her last convulsive sob, and his spirit winged its flight to another and a better world. Thus died Josias Wilson.

Had it pleased that Master whom it was his honour, delight, and joy to serve, in all faithfulness and godly sincerity in Christ Jesus, to have

spared his life some years longer in that "Modern Babylon," the good which his labours would have accomplished therein would have been great; for, if two years produced such mighty effects, we may naturally inquire what would a series of years, accompanied with such uninterrupted success, have produced. We are persuaded that we could only have pointed to the revival days of a Whitefield or a Wesley, to have shown anything equal to the mighty changes which his labours would have produced. But there are, no doubt, just bounds set to the operations of enthusiastic and finite man. That mandate, "hitherto shalt thou come and no farther," which, in the smiling morn of Nature's nativity, curbed the impetuous billows within due bounds, still holds its universal sway over all the planetary hosts of heaven's spangled dome—over all the works of nature, science, and art—and also over the labours of mortal man. In the lamented, and all but unexpected, demise of the subject of these remarks, we have a convincing proof of the verity of this general law of Nature's God.

His appearance in the pulpit, that "venerable place" which he so well became, only three months before his death, did not seem to say that he looked like an individual whom death had been commissioned to call hence, for ever, in so short a time. The noble and dignified air of command and self-possession; the eye sparkling with its native fire; the countenance, upon which a pleasing

smile of holy awe rested, indicative of the gentle passions which dwelt within ; the broad and manly chest, which seemed to proclaim that all was right there ; and the thrilling nature of his language ; did not, certainly, seem to say that the primeval curse would soon fall upon him. "Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return." Nay, did they not rather proclaim that he would arrive at a good old age—that his castle stood sure, and even promised a long succession of happy and useful years; but, "my ways are not as your ways, saith the Lord, neither are my thoughts as your thoughts." Indeed, it is not the province of man to dig into the hidden councils of eternity, or attempt to fathom the mind and will of an omniscient and omnipresent God. Great events, there enacted, take place at particular epochs, the fulfilment of which may, and often does, appear to our minds deep, dark, and mysterious, and even wear a cover of impenetrableness—are, nevertheless, ordained for great, good, and glorious purposes. Were we permitted, even for a moment, to draw aside the veil which hides the future from our view, and take but a passing glimpse at the operations of His hands, we would most undoubtedly conclude that "He has done all things well ;" but "His ways are past finding out."

"Man is not made to question, but adore."

We will not, therefore, dare to tread this for-

bidden ground, nor even attempt a solution of this mysterious event, his death ; we will rather lament the unexpected and sudden removal of so eminent and devoted a minister and benefactor of his fellow-mortals, and shed a tear of sympathy for her whose loss is irreparable and unspeakably great. "Where, alas ! can she meet with such unsuspected fidelity, or repose such unreserved confidence ?—where find so discreet a counsellor, so improving an example, and a guardian so sedulously attentive to her interests."

The sudden and unexpected manner in which it pleased God to call hence some of His most devoted and faithful ministers, puzzled Mr. Wilson himself ; and as his opinion on this subject may be peculiarly interesting, now that he is no more, we shall here close this part of our narrative by introducing the following extract, from a letter of his which he wrote to one of his friends in Drogheda, after the death of the Rev. Mr. Martin, his successor in that place :—

"I have often thought that his whole appearance indicated that he would not be long spared as a labourer in the Lord's vineyard. The ways of God in such cases are very mysterious, but though we cannot comprehend why God thus deals with His Church, in suddenly and unexpectedly removing His most valued ministers, as in the case of Spence, Henry Martyn, and others, yet be assured that it is done in infinite love and unerring wisdom, and the present lamentable dispensation that has befallen you as members of the Church of Christ, should induce you all to set a higher value upon Gospel privileges while

you enjoy them than you have ever yet done—should lead you all to ponder over the solemn instructions that, from Sabbath to Sabbath, you received from him who is gone, and, above all, should deeply convince you that the time is short and most uncertain.

"When living, the Lord spoke to you through him, and now, he being dead, speaketh to you in a still more instructive voice from his untenanted home and empty pulpit.

"The language of God to you is, here you have no continuing city or place of abode. Seek one to come whose builder and maker is God."

This is a very important letter. We can almost fancy that we hear it coming from his tomb. May we be enabled to both lay it to heart and practise it!

We have great pleasure in adding the two following testimonials of his life and labours. The Rev. John Weir says:—

"I can never forget the concentration, and the consequent rapidity and success of all his movements as a minister; and although he laboured for God only twenty-six years, yet I firmly believe, from my observations of his entire course, and especially of what I have seen, both in Belfast and London, that an amount of usefulness was realized, in this comparatively brief season, far exceeding what is ordinarily embraced within the period of half a century. No minister ever deserved or received more affection from his people. He lived for them. No wonder, therefore, that he lived in their bosoms. He was especially dear to the poor and to the young; and while, in his public appearance on the platforms of Missionary, Bible, and other religious societies, he was sure to give a powerful impulse to the noble object of his advocacy; and while he devoted a considerable time to such works of zeal and love, yet Mr.

Wilson was emphatically the pastor, and the words seemed to have been written on his heart, 'I dwell among my own people.' May the King of Zion raise up many such right-minded men to do His work in these last days, and to obey, with kindred alacrity to that of his departed servant, the urgent command, 'Go out quickly into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.' "

The next is from the Rev. Dr. John Bryson, of Wolverhampton:—

"I shall, as a minister of the Presbyterian Church in England, content myself with the expression of the greatest loss sustained by her in the removal of her most successful pastor. In his astonishing cleverness, his deep piety of soul, the popularizing tendency of his manners both in the pulpit and in the domestic circle, and in his unbounded philanthropy and goodwill toward all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, he proved himself to be at the same time the firmest pillar upon which our church in this country rested, and the greatest glory surrounding her."

CHAPTER X.

FUNERAL, MONUMENT, AND LETTERS OF CONSOLATION ADDRESSED TO MRS. WILSON.

After his death, the desire to see his remains, not only by his own people, but also by many who had merely heard him preach occasionally, was so great, that for some days afterwards crowds of people came to take a last look at the remains of their dear pastor and friend.

The *Presbyterian Messenger* thus notices his funeral:—

"The Rev. W. Nicolson, of London Wall Church, the last Moderator of the Presbytery of London, preached in the forenoon of Sabbath the 18th ult., at eleven o'clock, from Rev. xiv. 13—'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.' In the evening the Rev. W. Chalmers, of Marylebone, preached from John xiv. 18—'I will not leave you comfortless; I will come unto you.' The church, on both occasions, was crowded to excess in every part.

"THE FUNERAL.

"On Monday, at ten o'clock, the Presbytery of London held a meeting in the vestry of River Terrace Church, when they appointed the ministers to preach the funeral sermons on the following Sabbath, and made other necessary arrangements. At eleven the public service commenced in the church, which

was again crowded to excess, and many were unable to obtain admission. After singing and prayer, the Rev. W. Nicolson read and commented upon a portion of 1st Cor. xv., and gave an address; after which the Rev. Mr. Lewis, Congregational Minister, offered up a fervent prayer. The funeral procession then left the church. It was formed of thirty-seven carriages. The first four contained his relations, intimate friends, and the ministers who officiated; then followed the members of session, and the London Presbytery; and after these, the trustees of the church, &c.; and many hundreds, on foot, accompanied the hearse all the way to Highgate cemetery. The streets through which the funeral passed were everywhere lined with sorrowing spectators, and many of the shops were closed. On reaching the cemetery, a great crowd was found, awaiting the arrival of the funeral train. The coffin was then carried to the grave, and, after being lowered, the Rev. W. Chalmers delivered a most impressive address to the assembled multitude. At this time there were between three and four thousand present. The Rev. J. Ferguson, of John Knox Church, Stepney, then offered up a solemn prayer for the congregation, and others bereaved; beseeching Almighty God to give to all a sanctified improvement of so mysterious and painful a dispensation. Rarely has the loss of any individual produced so great a public sensation; and when we remember that it was little more than two years that Mr. Wilson laboured in Islington, the deep interest excited, far beyond the limits of his own congregation, is a striking testimony to his ministerial work and his Christian character."

"It was affecting," says a spectator, "to witness the laborious efforts made by some of the very poorest of his flock, that they might be spectators of the last services rendered to their late beloved pastor."

He must have endeared himself very much to

them, for neither age nor bodily infirmity kept them back; those labouring under disease, and even the cripple with his crutches, were to be seen moving on to the grave's mouth. In the memory of the oldest inhabitant of London, there never was seen such a large funeral; and we have it from the lips of a gentleman who lived in Islington, and who only knew Mr. Wilson by name, that, on the day of the funeral, he happened to be coming up the street, and met the vast procession: amazement overcome him, and he stood and gazed, wondering what great personage the hearse contained. After being informed who it was, he said, "that his heart smote him because he did not go to hear him, having been frequently urged by a friend."

The sermons which were preached on the Sabbath following his burial have been already published, and we shall, therefore, omit noticing them.

Besides the notice of his death in the *Presbyterian Messenger*, the *Patriot* newspaper, the *Banner of Ulster*, and the *Evangelical Magazine*, all devoted long and special articles, giving an excellent epitome of his life and labours, and speaking in the highest terms of his talents and general ministry.

Soon after his burial, a subscription was commenced by the congregation for erecting a monument in Highgate cemetery, to commemorate his memory. A spirit of liberality was soon visible, and ample funds speedily procured; and, in a short

time, there was erected a beautifully chaste white marble obelisk, surmounted by a funeral urn, and bearing the following inscription :—

ERECTED
BY THE PRESBYTERIAN CONGREGATION
OF RIVER TERRACE, ISLINGTON,
IN MEMORY OF THEIR BELOVED PASTOR,
THE REV. JOSIAS WILSON,
IN WHOSE LIGHT THEY REJOICED
FOR A SEASON,
AND FOR THE BLEST RESULTS
OF WHOSE LABOURS MANY OF THEM
SHALL PRAISE GOD THROUGH ETERNITY.
HE WAS DISTINGUISHED FOR ARDENT PIETY,
FERVENT ELOQUENCE, ABUNDANT LABOURS,
AND PASTORAL DEVOTEDNESS.
IN A COMPARATIVELY BRIEF CAREER
HE CONCENTRATED A VAST AMOUNT
OF USEFULNESS,
AND WAS THE INSTRUMENT, IN THE HANDS
OF THE MASTER WHOM HE LOVED,
OF FORMING OR ENLARGING
FOUR PROSPEROUS CONGREGATIONS,
IN TASSAGH, DROGHEDA, BELFAST, AND LONDON.
HE WAS A ZEALOUS WITNESS
FOR EVANGELICAL TRUTH,
FEARLESS IN REBUKING SIN,
AN ABLE ADVOCATE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS,
EMINENTLY CATHOLIC IN HIS SPIRIT,
THE FRIEND OF THE YOUNG,
THE COMFORTER OF THE AFFLICTED,
AND THE FATHER OF THE POOR.
AFTER HAVING SERVED HIS OWN GENERATION,
BY THE WILL OF GOD
HE FELL ASLEEP ON THE 13TH OF APRIL, 1847,
IN THE 48TH YEAR OF HIS AGE
AND THE 26TH OF HIS MINISTRY;
BREATHING A DESIRE TO DEPART
AND TO BE WITH CHRIST.

'HE WAS A GOOD MAN, AND FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST AND OF FAITH; AND MUCH PEOPLE WAS ADDED UNTO THE LORD.''
ACTS XI. 24.

After his death, Mrs. Wilson received a great many letters of condolence and sympathy in her sad bereavement. They also contained gratifying testimonies to the general usefulness of her dear departed husband. Of these we select a few, being more of a public character —

"At a meeting of the teachers of the Fisherwick Place Sabbath-school, held on the 18th of April, 1847, it was unanimously resolved, that the following letter should be sent Mrs. Wilson, of River Terrace, London :—

'"FISHERWICK PLACE,
"'BELFAST, *18th April*, 1847.

"'DEAR MRS. WILSON,—We, the teachers of Fisherwick Sabbath-school, being this evening specially convened to express to you our heartfelt sympathy, under your present heavy trial.

"'The room in which we are now assembled is associated with the remembrance of your departed husband, when met together to stimulate one another in the good work of the Lord; and we can now realize his appearance, and recal his voice, when he addressed us in words of faithfulness and encouragement, which, we trust, were not without practical good; and though we shall see him no more in the flesh, yet his memory shall be dear to us, and we shall ever think of him as the kind and valued friend.

"'We speak not of him as the honoured ambassador for Christ, as this is not our province as we are now assembled; but we rejoice to know that the Lord, in every place to which He called him, did so abundantly own his labours, making him wise in winning many souls to Christ; and we doubt not but that, in that happy world to which he has gone, many a redeemed soul has hailed him as the honoured instrument in leading them to Christ, and that now they who spake, and they who heard, are mingling their praises in the paradise of

God, and joining in the anthems of the heavens—'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever.'

"'We have together this evening offered up our petition at the heavenly throne for you and your daughter, that the Lord may be to you 'a very present help in trouble,' and comfort you in this the day of your sore bereavement.

"'Believe us, dear Mrs. Wilson, your sincerely sympathising friends, the teachers of Fisherwick Place Sabbath-school.

(Signed, for self and teachers),

CHARLES FINLAY, *Superintendent.*

The following letter is from Mrs. Wilson's female acquaintances in Belfast, and is signed by eighteen ladies:—

"BELFAST, *April 20th,* 1847.

"MY DEAR MRS. WILSON,—When we heard of your bereavement, we could not but think of our former companionship in the Christian labours of our Associations, and feel afflicted in your afflictions. Nay, we felt constrained to mingle our tears with yours, by writing to you of our sympathy and condolence, in the hope that your sorrow, which for the present must be poignant, might be in some degree mitigated and softened by the opening of our hearts to you. We felt also an affectionate interest in him who is gone to his reward, not only as being a faithful and devoted minister of the Lord Jesus, but to many of us a kind and sincere friend, with whom we felt it always peculiarly pleasant to meet. We felt our hearts stricken within us when we heard that he was called away in the midst of his labours. For a moment we were astonished and depressed, but we remembered it was the Lord's doing, and we had only to acquiesce in His sovereign and inscrutable wisdom. We could not but rejoice, also, that God was his exceeding great reward, and that to die was his gain—his unspeakable gain. We do not press

these topics of consolation and thankfulness upon you, now when your heart is bleeding, but we desire, out of the fulness of our own hearts, under the ever-abiding remembrances of our former happy and useful co-operation, to convey to you our deep-felt sympathies.

"We would say no more, but commend you and your dear daughter to Him who was touched with the feeling of our infirmities. And we pray that His all-sufficient grace may sustain you both in your present unspeakable trial.

"We are, with much affection, your sisters in the Lord,

"CHARLOTTE MORGAN,	"ELIZA HERON,
ANNA M'INTIRE,	ELLEN HAMILTON,
ELIZABETH HAMILTON,	ELIZA M'COMB,
JANE MARSHALL,	JANE BELLIS,
AGNES MACKEY,	ANNA SHAW,
CATHERINE COOKE,	ELIZA M'CLURE,
SALLY COCHRANE,	MARY JAMISON,
E. MURPHY,	MARIA MURPHY,
JANE ARROTT,	CATHERINE BLACK."

The next is from the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England :—

"SUNDERLAND, 22*d April*, 1847.

"MY DEAR MADAM,—It is with no ordinary feelings of emotion that the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England received intimation of the sorrowful event that has so very heavily bereaved your family of a most affectionate husband and father, his brethren of a dearly-beloved friend, and the church of one of her brightest ornaments.

"It is, indeed, a sorrowful event to them, but it is not so to him, for 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit.' 'He has fought a good fight, finished his course, kept the faith ;' and is now, doubtless, 'inheriting the promises.' He was called, by the grace of God, to preach the glorious Gospel of Christ to eager multi-

tudes, and privileged to see largely of the fruit of his labours He was counted worthy to be the honoured instrument of bringing many others to the knowledge of the truth; and while he warned, encouraged, and entreated sinners to flee for refuge to the hope set before them in the Gospel, he was himself abundantly blessed at his latter end with the full realization of the truth and faithfulness of that testimony which he had been commissioned as well as honoured to hold This is a precious balm for the wound which this sad trial has inflicted on his mourning family. They could plead in his behalf when he was laid on a bed of languishing—'He whom thou loved is sick.' They may now cherish the well-grounded hope that he is safe across the Jordan—that he has reached the promised land. And though, to our apprehension, he has been removed early from the sphere of his successful exertions, yet his work was done; he is now resting from his labours. And while his name has been added to those of the cloud of witnesses that went before him, the language of his peaceful and happy departure is doubtless such as this—'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright man, for the end of that man is peace. And be ye therefore ready also, for at such a time as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.'

"I am requested by the Synod to convey to you an expression of our deepest and most heart-felt sympathy under this very trying bereavement. We all feel that a master in Israel has fallen. We mourn his loss, as that of one whose place cannot be easily filled; and while we must look to Him who alone can help, when the help of man is vain, we earnestly desire that you, upon whom the stroke has fallen still more heavily, may be supported and borne up by the arm of the mighty God of Jacob. We confidently trust, that He who hath promised to be a Father to the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow, will enable you to roll your burden upon Himself; and we pray that He may abundantly bless and comfort you with those rich consolations of the Gospel, that are neither few nor small.

"In the name, and by the authority of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England, I have the honour to be, my dear Madam, yours in the fellowship of the Gospel,

"JAMES ANDERSON,
"Moderator of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in England.

"To Mrs. Josias Wilson, River Terrace,
Islington, London."

The following is from the teachers of the Sabbath-school in River Terrace:—

"RIVER TERRACE SABBATH-SCHOOL,
10*th May*, 1847.

"DEAR MADAM,—We desire, as teachers in connexion with the Sabbath-school, respectfully to give expression to our fellow-feeling, and our deep sympathy with you and yours, under your recent heavy bereavement; and, as we have been called upon to taste of the same cup which so overwhelmed you, we are prepared, the more feelingly, to tender our condolence, and mingle our sorrow with yours.

"The cup which your gracious Heavenly Father has given you to drink has been a bitter one indeed, but still it was attended with many mercies. He who 'tempers the wind to the shorn lamb,' and 'stayeth His rough wind in the day of the east wind,' hath smoothed the points of the arrow, and will He fail to heal the wounds which He Himself inflicted? He has removed from you 'the covering of your eyes,' and 'the desire of your heart;' but has He not pledged Himself to establish the borders of the widow, and be a Father to the fatherless? He has caused you to mourn, but it has not been as those who sorrow without hope; for, in His great mercy, He enabled your beloved departed one to leave such a testimony behind him, as fully assures us that our united loss is his great gain; and it will not fail to comfort you in passing through the deep waters of affliction, to call to mind that that Gospel which he preached so powerfully to others in

the day of his strength, was tho solace and stay of his own soul in the hour of weakness and in death; and that he was thus enabled to put his dying seal to the truth and power of Divine grace.

"He was not forsaken by his Master in the hour of extremity, neither was he forgotten by the people among whom he so acceptably laboured, for they, too, tasted the bitter waters of Mara; and the bond of union which bound him and them together in life was not severed in death, for even death had no power to destroy the tie which knit them together.

"But here we need not dwell upon the many pleasing recollections connected with the memory of him whose departure we all mourn. Yet we cannot but feel that our school (the interests of which we all have so much at heart), has lost in him an affectionate friend, and a warm and generous advocate; one, indeed, whose bright example is worthy of our closest imitation, and whose spirit we would desire most earnestly to imbibe.

"We would also acknowledge, with gratitude, the kind interest which you and your affectionate daughter have always taken in training up the young of the flock for eternal life; and we pray that the chief Shepherd, who so tenderly carries the lambs in His bosom, may guide you in your pilgrimage through this wilderness, and, in His own good time, bring you safely to the heavenly Canaan; and, as a chasm is now formed in your breast, which mortal creatures cannot fill, our heart's desire is, that He who made that void may Himself fill it, by unfolding to you, in all their fullness, those treasures of riches, of glory, and consolation, which His children have ever found in Him in the time of trial and need; and thus, commending you to His gracious favour and protection, we remain, dear Madam, yours most sincerely,

(Signed on behalf of the teachers and self),

"ALEXANDER SINCLAIR.

"To Mrs. Wilson, River Terrace."

"BELFAST, 16*th April*, 1847.

"MY DEAR MRS. WILSON,—Yesterday I received the distressing intelligence of the death of your beloved husband, my long-tried and faithful friend. I am scarcely competent yet to express my feelings on an event so unexpected and afflictive, but I cannot withhold from pouring out my sympathy into the bosom of his bereaved family. Had I been taken away, I know how the intelligence would have come upon him; and, in his death, I feel that one of my attractions to the present life is removed But there are many reasons for a cheerful submission to the Divine will, even in this heavy trial. The first thought that took possession of my mind was that of his own perfected happiness. How blessed the hope in his death! Truly we are not to sorrow as those who have no hope. What a difference! There is all the evidence that could be furnished that he sleeps in Jesus. Blessed contemplation! Who would awake him out of that sweet, refreshing sleep, to mingle again in the turmoils and perplexities of this sinful world? I am sure you would not. His life was the evidence of his faith—the best evidence; but it has greatly cheered me to hear of the manner of his death. I am most thankful to Mr. Stevenson, and others, who gave me so many particulars of his dying experience. And I bless and magnify the name of the Lord, who did indeed stand by His servant, and enabled him, with such assured and triumphant faith, to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. I have treasured up the brief notes of these friends as precious memorials of my beloved brother's dying peace, and sure tokens of the all-sufficient grace of his adorable Redeemer. Nor can I help expressing to you the thought that next took possession of my mind, after I had indulged myself in the contemplation of his happiness. He is dead—and that without a blot on his fair name. God kept him long, and kept him to the last. The promise was fulfilled to him, that saints "are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." This is not to be forgotten, but must be remembered to the praise of the glory of the grace of God. How many, even of

God's servants and eminent ministers, have been left to do somewhat that needed to be kept out of sight. And he was placed in trying circumstances. His great popularity was dangerous—yet God preserved him. No inconsistency can be charged upon his memory. He is gone down with untarnished lustre. I am now permitted to behold such a consummation, in the case of a minister of Christ, that I do feel impelled to cry out, 'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name.' Abraham Booth, the author of the 'Reign of Grace,' once said to a young minister at his ordination, when he himself was advanced in years—'I am under the continual apprehension that God may leave me before I die, to do some action that will disgrace my ministry, and bring reproach on my name and memory.' There is reason to fear always. But 'grace is sufficient;' and ever magnified be that grace which has now triumphed in our beloved one, and carried him in safety through the perils of life, the sufferings of death, and the temptations of the adversary. Let us not fail to bless God on his behalf. We would have desired for him longer life; but since it has pleased God to order it otherwise, we must not forget how long he was spared to bear the holy vessels of the ministry, and how much he was honoured while he laboured. It was no small honour to be allowed to work for a quarter of a century in the vineyard of Christ. And how our tenderly-cherished friend did work! The memorials of his success are of a most permanent kind. Drogheda presents one enduring inscription to his memory in its church, and manse, and school. Townsend Street is the same, and River Terrace does him a like honour. These are happy fruits of a faithful and successful ministry, for which we praise God. But there is better far in the living stones which he was permitted to add to the temple of the Lord. There is reason to believe that many will meet him at God's right hand, who will be to him 'a crown and joy' there. It was only last week a case occurred in this town of the death of a young man, who told one of our Sabbath-school teachers that he owed his conversion to Mr. Wilson's ministry.

Many, of whom none of us ever heard before, are bearing the same testimony. Indeed, it would seem as if his death were to be useful here as well as his life. It has produced a deep impression on the public mind. The intelligence of it has quickened many souls. We will feel it to be our duty to turn it to account for the good of the living. I feel it to be a great warning to myself. I have been associated with him all my life, from our entrance at college. I felt towards him as a twin-brother. O why am I spared, when he is taken! May the Lord prepare me to follow him, and to labour after the example of his diligence and zeal! To your own soul, and to dear Agnes, I trust the bereavement may be sanctified. In heaven, I indulge the hope, you will find it to be of 'the all things that work together for good.' His congregation are bereaved too, but their Head liveth—'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.' That He may bless you and them, is the earnest prayer of your affectionate friend and brother,

"JAMES MORGAN."

"LONDONDERRY, *August* 12, 1847.

"MY DEAR MRS. WILSON,—When the deputation from the Presbyterian Church in England appeared at the late meeting of our General Assembly, we felt bound to express our sympathy for the loss they had sustained by the death of the Rev. Josias Wilson. We had long witnessed the success of his ministry in three different charges in Ireland, where, in all things, he approved himself as a minister of God; and knowing that, through his fervour and devotedness, the cause of truth and godliness was advancing in the great metropolis of these kingdoms, we mourned, with our English brethren, his sudden removal from the field of usefulness and honour in which he was engaged. While the church has thus been deprived of an ardent and most successful labourer, *your* loss, dear Madam, has been greater still.

"I am instructed by the General Assembly to convey to you

and to your daughter an expression of their deepest sympathy, and their earnest prayer that you may be supported under this trying dispensation, by the power and spirit of Him who has promised 'I will not leave you comfortless.'

"Having enjoyed so long the friendship of your late partner, and received so much kindness from him, I have personally a melancholy pleasure in thus being the organ of communicating to you the assurance of our deep sorrow for his loss, and of the respect in which his memory is held.

"Believe me, my dear Mrs. Wilson,

"Very faithfully and sincerely yours,

"WILLIAM M'CLURE,

"Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Ireland."

PART II.

HAVING thus traced the leading events in the life of this eminent Christian and devoted Minister, from his birth to his death, we shall now attempt to lay before our readers a general portraiture of his character, and the means whereby he was enabled to accomplish so much good in his brief existence; and we believe that this will be best accomplished by adopting the following divisions, viz.:—

I.—HIS PULPIT MINISTRY.

II.—HIS WEEK-DAY MINISTRY.

III.—HIS GENERAL CHARACTER.

CHAPTER I.

HIS PULPIT MINISTRY.

Under the first head, we shall view his appearance and manner in the pulpit, and his style and matter of discourse, with the effects which it produced. On entering the pulpit, a dignified and holy awe possessed the whole man, and his very appearance commanded attention. After praying for a short time, he then stood up, and cast his eyes over the church, to see how many of his flock were present or absent, for he could almost tell this at a glance. He then gave out the psalm, prefacing it with explanatory remarks, which were exceedingly plain and instructive, and delivered in such a lively and pleasing style, that we almost felt uneasy to commence singing it, ardently wishing to join in its sentiments. The intimate knowledge of the spiritual and temporal state of his people, which he gained by his domiciliary visits, enabled him to select suitable psalms, and, through his peculiarly animating style of reading them, they very often produced excellent effects.

Many instances of this might be quoted, but we shall allow the following to suffice. The writer was obliged to leave London on account of his

health, a circumstance which Mr. Wilson fully understood. The Sabbath before the writer left London, he, of course, was at River Terrace Church, and on this occasion Mr. Wilson gave out, after sermon, the 20th paraphrase ; and when he came to the fifth verse, he lifted up his head and hand, and looked the writer stedfastly in the face —faith and lively trust in God beaming in his countenance—and, with deep pathos and fervour, read—

"Trust in the Lord, for ever trust,
And banish all your fears ;
Strength in the Lord Jehovah dwells,
Eternal as His years."

He then turned away his head and proceeded as before. The writer felt convinced that he addressed him personally, and ever afterwards, when trouble or perplexity comes, this paraphrase comes vividly to the mind, and leaves a cheering influence behind.

It had been familiar to him since his boyish days, but he can truly aver that never until that moment, in which Mr. Wilson was the means of sending it home to his heart, did he see its beauty, or realize its cheering influence.

His prayers embraced a wide range of ideas, so catholic were his thoughts ; and, from the manner of their delivery, and the effects produced, it was very evident that they came from a heart thoroughly imbued with the Spirit of God, and

in every respect minutely acquainted with the machinations and wiles of the devil. They were "like live coals from the altar"—they came from the heart and they went thither. In reading the chapter before sermon, he had a happy manner of making most excellent remarks and hits as he proceeded. For instance, he was on one occasion reading the 4th chapter of the Ephesians, and he read on to the eleventh verse, viz.—" And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers"—here he paused, looked up, and exclaimed, " But He never gave a Pope!"—" for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

We remember, on another occasion, somewhere about Easter, when he was preaching to a great crowd in the Denmark Street School-room, he read the 12th chapter of the Acts, and when he came to the 4th verse, which says, "intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people," a long pause followed, and all eyes were fixed upon him, and every ear pricked; he then said, in a most commanding and impressive tone, " Methinks I hear some one say—You, Presbyterians, say that you observe no saint-days, feasts, or festivals, just because they are not sanctioned in your Bibles; but here I find that Easter is mentioned, and apparent reverence shown to it. Now, then, how readest thou, or what sayest thou to this?

Brethren, be not deceived, for, from the book of Genesis to the book of Revelations, no such word ever occurs. It is a false and infamous translation and perversion of the Word of God, and it ought to have been expunged long ago." (And with that he hit the Bible with his hand, and gave a smart stamp with his foot.) "The original Greek word here translated Easter is πασχα (paska), which signifies the passover, and ought to have been so rendered; but king James, who was half a Pope, told the translators that they must retain as many of the old ecclesiastic words as possible, and hence we have this word disgracing these venerable pages in the nineteenth century." It was in a great measure by such instantaneous and brilliant flashes that he succeeded in rivetting attention, and causing every ear to drink in each word which fell from his lips, and scattered to the winds the mists of man's invention, which obscure the real meaning of this and similar passages of Scripture.

We now come to consider his style and manner of discourse. His style of preaching was eminently fluent and easy, addressed both to the understanding and conscience of his hearers, in language forcible, emphatic, eloquent and plain, enriched by pleasing illustrations culled from passing events. Indeed, he allowed no event to escape unnoticed—criminal prosecutions, police reports, and newspapers, were all laid under

heavy contribution, whereby he illustrated some Scriptural precept, or proved the truth of the Word of God both in the punishment of he guilty and the reward of the righteous, here and hereafter. His gestures in the pulpit were graceful and natural, there was no straining after effect. His countenance was a sort of mental thermometer, whereby we could easily measure the feelings and passions which dwelt within ; and, as the painter is obliged to use different colours, in order that the due combination of light and shade may produce its effect, so Mr. Wilson modulated is voice, and caused his countenance to pourtray every sort of passion and feeling, from the winning smile to the stern rebuke, in order that his eloquence might be continually changing its dress, so as to rivet the attention of his hearers. Nor was this all, for, as Mr. Weir says, "he stated Gospel truths with great clearness, and enforced them with a fervour peculiarly his own; and his plainness of speech in dealing with men's consciences was so homely and graphic, as to strike home at once conviction to his hearers." In one word, he was in earnest. The manner of seizing upon passing events, which he adopted, had a mighty effect in arresting the attention of his hearers. We remember that on the week after he came to London, the Queen, in royal procession opened the New Royal Exchange, on which occasion there was a magnificent banquet. On

the following Sabbath the sacrament of the Lord's Supper was dispensed in River Terrace, as before alluded to. Mr. Wilson chose for his text on this occasion—"He brought me into His banqueting-house, and His banner over me was love." There was just one object in the whole of this discourse, to which, for the space of three quarters of an hour, he applied all his energy of thought and power of illustration, and that object was a banquet. His mind moved as if it had been on hinges, contrasting the banquet which the Queen and Nobles shared a day or two before, and the richer provision which was that day spread on the sacramental table in River Terrace. Simile followed simile, until the subject was completely exhausted; while, in the peroration, he set before his audience a ravishing description of that banquet in heaven, where Christ shall preside, and "drink anew of the fruit of the vine."

The effects of this discourse were very perceptible, and afterwards 102 sat down to the table of the Lord. The invitation was warmly given, and it was cordially responded to, as sixty-two more than the number which partook of the blessed ordinanee just before he came, communicated. During these seasons of communion he was particularly happy. He appeared as if for the time being he had cast off all that grosser nature which gravitate towards earth and earthly things, and mounted on wings of love and realizing faith the summit of Pisgah's

top, and, in holy ecstacies, saw the "land afar off," though full in view. He deeply lamented the English custom* of shutting up this blessed ordinance in a corner, i.e., in not permitting the non-communicating portion of the congregation to remain as spectators to witness the holy feast. To prove that the Lord is sometimes pleased to communicate His blessing to spectators on such occasions, he was in the habit of reciting the case of John Brown, the commentator, who, when a child, secreted himself in an empty pew, after the greater portion of the congregation had withdrawn, to behold the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and was so struck with it, that he afterwards affirmed that he believed it to be the first means of his conversion.

His appeals and entreaties were not in vain, and, latterly, very few retired from River Terrace on sacramental Sabbaths before the whole service was ended.

He advocated the sitting attitude, because it was agreeable to the church to which he belonged, and Scriptural; but he believed that forms had an insignificant meaning, when the spirit was

* We are glad to see that the Bishop of Oxford advocated, a few days ago, the propriety and necessity of all the congregation remaining in the church during the celebration of the sacrament, in a sermon which he preached at the re-opening of a church in Bucks. His Lordship's requests were unanimously obeyed; not one person left the church, though it was crowded.

right. The writer asked his opinion of the propriety of kneeling at the sacrament. He replied, "any posture* is proper, if love for Christ prompts you to its observance. Go," said he, "to the Church of England, and receive the sacrament, if you have no other place more agreeable to you, and thank God for the privilege."

His felicity of illustration was very great. For instance, he could show that a single preposition, when properly emphasised and explained, was of the greatest importance in rendering plain the plan of salvation. In a sermon, which he preached on the manslayer, he showed that the whole hopes and safety of the manslayer depended upon his getting into the "city of refuge." "He might," said he, "after running a hard, long, and perilous race, get to the very walls—he might even get to the very door or gate of the city—but if he did not get INTO the city, he was no more safe than if he had been a thousand miles from it. Hence he particularly dwelt upon the necessity of the manslayer getting admission into the city, and showed that there was only one way of obtaining this. He might attempt to get over the wall, but here he would signally fail; and he could not break through it, because it was too strong.

* In the "Life of Rowland Hill," we remember reading that he told a punctilious individual that he would administer the sacrament to him in any posture, "*except standing on his head!*"

He must, therefore, apply at the door, or gate, and be admitted there, if anywhere." He then applied this to the sinner flying for refuge to Christ. "He must get INTO Christ—enter by Him. 'I am the door,' *in* Christ." Fresh beauties appeared at every turn, and we are aware that, from this very passage, many minds were enlightened upon the plan of salvation.* On such subjects as these he was peculiarly happy in convincing all that, without the imposition of Prelatic hands, he held his commission from Heaven, and was an ambassador for God; and, in all the fervour of his nature and dignity of his office, offered a passport to the skies, IN and through Christ, to all the sons and daughters of Adam.

His sermons did not consist of that stilted theology and chilling formality which is enough "to freeze the soul into spiritual death." He seldom dived into metaphysical disquisitions; nor did he ever attempt to reconcile, by reasoning, any of those Gospel mysteries, viz., Trinity in Unity, or Unity in Trinity, or how it is that the doctrine of election and reprobation is equally taught with the offer of free grace to all. These doctrines he fearlessly taught, but generally disposed of them by such observations as these:—" There are mysteries in the formation of a straw, which the most gigantic minds cannot comprehend. Che-

* See "Instances of Godly Old Women," page 260.

mistry tells me that it contains potash, soda, lime, magnesia, iron, glass, &c., which I believe, just because science has proved it ; but I cannot comprehend how these different ingredients combine to form straw ; nevertheless, I believe they do, because the organs of my external sense show me it. In like manner, I firmly believe that there are three persons in the Godhead, and yet they are *one;* and this I believe because my Bible tells me, and I know it cannot lie, therefore I believe the one, and I believe the other, although my weak, sinful, and finite mind cannot reconcile the one nor reconcile the other; and I bow with submission to the revelations of the Scriptures and the revelations of science, and I look forward to that period when sin, which now so beclouds my poor mind, shall be done away, and all these now hidden mysteries appear clear as the noon-day." It is, indeed, a most presumptuous thing for man to disbelieve a truth, because his weak and erring intellect cannot comprehend why it is, or because he may imagine that it does not tally with the approved rules of science. This is the hot-bed from which infidelity and scepticism spring rampant. A very remarkable and lamentable case of this was brought to light a few months since at Oxford. One J. A. Froud, M.A., and a Fellow of Exeter College, was in the habit of hearing the notorious Dr. Pusey preach. On one day he was babbling about the sun stand-

ing still at the command of Joshua, and he took occasion to find great fault with the Bible, because it did not agree with science. "Now," said the worldly, erudite, philosophical, and chimerical Doctor, "the Bible says that the sun goes round, science says that the sun stands, and only moves upon its axis." Here was a discovery. However, the Doctor descanted so eloquently and learnedly upon it, that this young man Froud brought himself to believe that the Bible was a tissue of lies—a downright forgery. He, consequently, set his ingenuity and learning to work, and has given to the world* a book which scoffs at everything that is holy. This production was only a few days from the press until it was severely exposed by all reviewers, and the attention of the college to which he belonged was directed to its satanic effusions; it was condemned, and publicly burned in the hall of the college, and his name struck off the list of fellows. Indeed, it has lately transpired that, for very sufficient reasons, it never ought to have been there. In this, however, we clearly see the hand of a merciful Providence, for had his book not appeared at the exact time it did, he would have been master of a collegiate institution in New Zealand, as the Government had actually conferred this upon him; but, hearing of his infamous authorship, his

* ' Nemesis of Faith,'' by J. A. Froud, M.A.

appointment was cancelled. Had he become master of a college, with his mind pregnant with such trash, the seeds of his infidelity might have taken deep root in the bosoms of those under his tuition, and have produced a world of misery; but we thank God that this was thwarted.

Now, Mr. Wilson taught that the great fault in the present day, in studying the Scriptures, was just this, that men, whose minds are filled with the learning of the world, will not, in general, bow to the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The poet speaks the truth, when he says—

"Church quacks, with passions under no command,
Who fill the world with doctrines contraband,
Discoverers of they know not what, confined
Within no bounds—the blind that lead the blind;
To streams of popular opinion drawn,
Deposit in these shallows all their spawn."

Hence, we admire Mr. Wilson's wisdom in avoiding all these mysterious topics, so long as there is a devil to be conquered, and a world of wickedness to be subdued.

The doctrines which he preached were those in accordance with the Standards of the church to which he belonged, and are admirably summed up in that excellent epitome of divinity, "The Shorter Catechism;" namely, original sin and total alienation of the heart from God, until brought nigh by sovereign grace—free pardon to all through Christ Jesus—adoption, justification,

sanctification, and final glorification through the agency of the Spirit. These were the themes upon which he warmly and eloquently descanted, whereby he fully and plainly showed the different processes through which the soul that is "afar off" is brought nigh by the blood of Christ.

In enforcing these, he had recourse to every species of logic, argument, and incident, as has been already stated; and when these failed, though, indeed, that was rare, his fertile ingenuity and imagination soon suggested a tangible way to convince and enlighten his audience. At one time he had been preaching in Paisley, in Scotland, and in his sermon he told several anecdotes illustrative of the superstition of the Irish Roman Catholics; but whether he fancied that the Scotch people did not credit what he said, or whether he thought himself that it might appear incredulous to people not accustomed to it, certain it is, that on his next visit he went prepared to give them ocular demonstration of his apparently most incredulous anecdote, namely, that the Roman Catholics in the neighbourhood where he resided, (then Drogheda), believed that their sins were pardoned by hanging a piece of *rag* on the *branch* of a *holly tree, which overshadowed a holy well in the neighbourhood.* Every branch on this tree was covered with rags, hung up for this purpose by the poor, credulous, and ignorant Catholics. Mr. Wilson, before his next visit to Scotland, procured, during

the night, a branch from this tree, and carried it with him, and when preaching in St. George's Church, Paisley, on a Sabbath evening, to a crowded congregation, in one of his warmest and fervent appeals he displayed this *branch*, covered with rags, to the gaze of the astonished audience. A spectator on this occurrence remarks, "This specimen was better than a thousand arguments in silencing doubts, and the manner of doing it reminds one of that of Edmund Burke, when he drew forth the dagger in the House of Commons, and said, 'This is what you get by fraternizing with France.' "

> "And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
> To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies;
> *He tried* each *art*, reproved each dull delay,
> Allured to brighter worlds and led the way."

While engaged in preaching, he could not bear the least noise or irregularity in the church. If a child became troublesome, he would stop and say, "That child must be removed;" and during its removal, he would make some appropriate remark, such as, "The house of God is a nursery in one sense of the word, but not in another."

His pulpit services were rendered still more attractive by the method which he adopted in announcing the subject upon which he intended to preach. For instance, after sermon, he would say, "I intend, God willing, to commence on next

Lord's-day," or evening, as the case might be, "a series of sermons on the NEGATIVE descriptions of Heaven. The first of these discourses to which I shall direct your serious attention will be, 'No night there;'" thus he would go on, announcing Sabbath after Sabbath "'No sea there,' 'No sun there,' 'No temple there,' 'No pain there.'" &c.

He invariably announced the subject of his discourse a week previously to his taking it up, and the novelty and attraction consisted in this, that he scarcely ever mentioned the words of his intended text; he would name the book, chapter and verse and state in two or three words the sum and substance of it.

We feel convinced that this had a very good effect, as we are aware that it excited a feeling of curiosity, and brought out many who would otherwise have remained at home; and we are persuaded that were it more generally adopted by ministers, it would produce good results.

He was particularly bold in rebuking from the pulpit the sins of his people. We remember that on one occasion he was preaching a sermon in River Terrace Church to an immense congregation, on Daniel praying three times a day, with the window thrown open, and his face towards Jerusalem. He was expatiating most eloquently on the Christian daring and conduct of Daniel in acting thus, notwithstanding that, at this very time he was forbidden to pray, and was under

sentence of death for doing so. All eyes were fixed upon him. He made a pause—his countenance assumed a most animating appearance, and he said, "Ah, Daniel, I vastly admire thy noble fortitude and Christian character. Oh how different was the conduct of a lady belonging to this church, upon whom I called a few days ago, who, when I was preparing to pray with the family, jumped up and pulled down the window-blind, as she said,"—here a smile of sarcasm played upon his countenance, and he exclaimed—"for fear the people on the opposite side of the street would see us praying at twelve o'clock in the day!"

Soon after this the writer saw him, and alluded to this rebuke, and said, that it actually made him shudder; and that he feared if the lady was present she would not come again to church. "Yes," said he, "she was present, and if she will not bear to have her sins chastised she may stay at home; but I am happy to tell you that, on my next visit, which was only a day or two ago, when we were at prayers the blind was not drawn down as before."

We will here relate another of a still more striking nature:—A man and his wife, who kept a gin-shop in London, wished to receive the sacrament, but Mr. Wilson did not consider them proper subjects, as they were both addicted to the bottle. On the preparatory Sabbath, his eye caught these persons coming into church, their

faces bearing evidence of the liberal nature of their morning's potations. In his sermon he was reciting the characters forbidden to partake of this ordinance, "among whom," looking these individuals steadfastly in the face, "are those who can come to the house of God with their *faces blazing* from the effects of their morning libations." Suffice it to say, they did not come to the table, and afterwards Mr. Wilson had the delight to witness a decided change in their character for the better.

We shall now recite some instances of the efficacy of his preaching. We stated in a former part that, just before his coming to reside in Belfast, he assisted the Rev. Dr. Morgan at the sacrament, and preached in his church in the evening. It so happened that, precisely at this time, there was a class of fanatic religionists pervading the North of Ireland, whose belief was, that in forty years the world would be at an end, and that all those who were enlisted under their banner would then be carried to Jerusalem, to build anew the temple of God, and the holy city, and would there live and reign with Christ a thousand years. It need scarcely be stated that in this, as in all other newly-born romantic visions, from the days of Mahomet to the present gullible days of "Agapemone," or the abode of love, hundreds of persons were stupid enough to take for gospel all that they advanced. It happened that one of the

deluded followers of those visionists, who had been brought up a Presbyterian, was in Fisherwick Place Church on this evening, and Mr. Wilson's text was, "The Gospel must first be preached unto all nations, then shall the end come." In his sermon from these words, he took occasion to allude to this sect, and to expose its dangerous dogmas; and so eloquent and forcible were his appeals both to Scripture and reason, that this person soon afterwards renounced his faith in their doctrine, shaved off his beard, which all of these religionists were obliged to wear as an insignium of their creed, and resumed his former profession, and is now, to our knowledge, a respected elder in the Presbyterian Church. This individual is a remarkably sensible man; and he has told the writer that, from that one sermon of Mr. Wilson's, he received more light on the nature of the economy of the Gospel dispensation than he had ever gained before. This fact speaks a volume: the bow was drawn by a skilful hand, and the arrow was guided home. The following instance of his power in arresting sinners is very remarkable and delightful. A young woman, of the name of Alice Spence, who worked in a mill, and was exceedingly thoughtless and giddy, came one evening out of sheer curiosity to hear him preach, and took her seat directly opposite the pulpit, on the gallery. He was warmly urging the sinner to embrace Jesus Christ; and, in one of his most urgent

appeals, he threw out his arm, leant over the pulpit, and looked next the gallery, and implored all to fly to the "Lamb of God." The Word went home with power to the heart of this poor girl, and in after-life she became distinguished for piety; and her death, which occurred a few weeks after Mr. Wilson's, proved that she was a child of God and an heir of the promises. There are some striking traits in this poor girl's character which, perhaps, our readers will excuse us in mentioning, especially as they will prove that she had passed from "darkness to light,"—such as her contributing to all Christian objects in connexion with the church out of a *weekly* pittance of *four shillings*, which she had to labour hard for in a mill, establishing prayer-meetings among her companions, teaching poor children at night, principally Roman Catholics, to read the Bible, buying tracts and distributing them, besides performing a great many other benevolent and Christian acts, which are enough to crimson the cheek of others, when they consider their opportunities and apathetic lives. Her labours of love proved her faith to be sincere. Mr. and Mrs Wilson took a particular interest in this girl, and had her sent to school for six months, to qualify her for becoming a teacher, which she was for a year before her death, at a place near Birr, in Ireland.

Mr. Wilson used to say, that at communion seasons he was very much overcome at seeing Alice

come forward to the table with a number of her companions, whom she had been instrumental in bringing under his ministry. Thus, like the woman of Samaria and blind Bartimeus, when convinced of sin and the darkness removed, she became a preacher, and says to her companions, "Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did."

> " And publishes to all around
> What a dear Saviour she has found."

This is what we want in the church—first, converted ministers, and then the flame will soon expand and set on fire other bosoms, and a general conflagration of burning zeal will be the result.

Another case is that of a godly old woman, who was struggling in "the valley of the shadow of death," and could not see her way, nor catch a glimpse of light to enable her to see the plan of salvation. In this state of mind she came to hear Mr. Wilson, and his text was, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." "This," said she, "is precisely my own case," and after sermon she went home much distressed.—However, she came again in the evening, and his subject of discourse was "the cities of refuge," and from this sermon she was enabled to see clearly the nature of salvation, and fled to Christ, got INTO Christ, and is now rejoicing in the Lord, and become a most consistent Christian. Like

others who have fled thither for refuge, she instantly desired to bring others with her, and succeeded in persuading a careless woman to come and hear Mr. Wilson explain how admission was to be obtained. This woman saw the plan, but was not willing to accept of it on the terms, as she thought they were too rigid. However, after hearing of his death, she was overwhelmed with grief, and began seriously to consider what he had told her, and this, by the grace of God, was the means of her conversion. She is now a most consistent Christian.

A young lady, a member of the congregation, who resided with her uncle, had frequently urged upon him to accompany her to hear Mr. Wilson; but he, for a long time, refused to listen to her entreaties, and raised many objections to attending dissenting churches, being a stanch Episcopalian. However, finding his niece, like the man begging the loaves in the Gospel, so importunate, he said, "Well, I do not mind if I do go with you for once, if you will promise me a comfortable pew, in which I may enjoy a nap, as I understand that the sermons of Dissenters are very long and prosy." His niece was too much delighted not to promise compliance. Sabbath came, and at the hour for commencing worship the young lady and her uncle entered church, and, singular enough, Mr. Wilson's sermon happened to be on the "Excuses." Suffice it to say, that the old gentleman *slept*

none. His conscience received a terrible probing —so much so, that he afterwards told a friend of ours that "he verily thought that Mr. Wilson preached the whole sermon to him;" and declared, "that he told him his character so truly that he really believed some one had told Mr. Wilson of it." Next Sabbath he came to hear more of his character, and afterwards laid by his prayer-book, and regularly attended River Terrace Church. Thus,

"Fools, who came to mock, remained to pray."

Hence, let Christian ministers learn the utility of faithfully and *pointedly* declaring the whole counsel of God. "Thou art the man!" are the stunning words which strike terror and conviction upon the conscience, turn the thoughts *inwards,* and make us ask the significant question, "Is it so?"

Mr. Wilson was too deeply skilled in the philosophy of the human heart to allow his faithfulness, and *pointed plainness* of speech in preaching, to frighten people from attending his ministry, if it did occasionally produce a ruffle of the "old man" in the bosom of his hearers, which this style of preaching is almost sure to do. "He hath a devil, why hear ye Him?" said the Jews to our Saviour's pointed appeals. "Much learning hath made thee mad," said Paul's hearers to his piercing ministry. In Mr. Wilson's case, this feeling

was speedily removed by a visit to the individual's home. Here the stern rebuke and plainness of speech which, perhaps, gave offence, were seen to proceed from a kind and generous bosom, deeply anxious for their eternal salvation, and it was, therefore, looked upon as the faithful chiding of paternal love.

The last case of this nature which we shall relate occurred in London, in River Terrace; and although the seed which was planted did not, to our knowledge, produce fruit, nevertheless it will show the striking nature of his ministry. An infidel, who had been frequently urged by his wife to accompany her to River Terrace Church, at last consented, and Mr. Wilson on this occasion was preaching on disbelieving Thomas. This person was sitting under the pulpit, and his name was Thomas. Mr. Wilson, at one part of his discourse, leaned over the pulpit to address those under it, and this poor man was so struck, that he actually thought that Mr. Wilson was addressing him solely. He told his wife afterwards, that at the time he verily believed that he was going to faint; and remained under deep convictions, and became a regular hearer as long as Mr. Wilson lived.

Mr. Weir speaks of the efficacy of Mr. Wilson's preaching, and the effects of it, which came under his own observation, as follows:—

"It pleased God to honour his preaching with a great

blessing, especially among young persons, many of whom became afterwards active and faithful teachers in the Sabbath-school. Some of these teachers were eminent for their devotional habits—'fearing the Lord, and speaking often one to another.' I recollect the first funeral which I attended, after going to Belfast, was that of Nancy Stewart, a devoted young woman, who, with Alice Spence, had met, immediately after Mr. Wilson's departure to London, in the Tea Lane School-room, night after night, alone in the darkness with their God, after coming out of the flax-mill, to supplicate a special blessing on the congregation, and to ask that the Head of the Church would send them speedily another pastor. These were specimens of his labours. I know that many from Townsend Street will rise up at the great day and call him blessed. I cannot doubt, from what I saw and heard, that, while very many, who were attracted at first chiefly by his earnest eloquence, his frank and kindly nature, and his self-denying exertions, afterwards received the truth in the love of it, and were brought into the fellowship of the Father, and of His Son Jesus Christ. Indeed, the seeds which our departed friend sowed, sprung up to light and beauty after he was gone from the field. This I especially desire to notice ; at River Terrace a goodly number were added to the church, who had received saving impressions from his ministry, of which he himself knew nothing, and which were, for the first time, revealed to myself frequently with much agitation and many tears.''

We shall finish this part of our subject by giving the following pleasing and excellent anecdote from the pen of that eminent Christian, Sir Andrew Agnew. It happened that Mr. Wilson visited Scotland in the year 1842, and after his return home he received the following communication from Sir Andrew :—

"On the day you left us, an old woman said, with much pleasure, 'that your preaching was like talking to her at the fire-side; and, ignorant as she was, she could understand every word—weak as she was, she would willingly travel six miles to hear you preach again—and, poor as she was, she would give anybody a sixpence to take care of her old man in her absence.' Surely you will reward so much enthusiasm, observes Sir Andrew, by coming again, seeing that we are not altogether beyond the reach of inspiration. Neither are your temperance hints forgotten; they have furnished matter for many a discussion, both with old and young."

CHAPTER II.

HIS WEEK-DAY MINISTRY.

WE now come to consider his week-day ministry, and, in this chapter, we shall confine ourselves to his pastoral visits, his pioneering exertions, and his labours for and among other denominations.

He who preaches a sermon only on a Sabbath-day—however brilliant in rhetoric, conclusive in logic, captivating in language, and rich in Gospel truths his discourse may be—and then retires into seclusion and repose until the slow but certain wheels of time brings round the next occasion for another similar display, we believe may not inaptly be compared to the physician who prescribes a medicine for his patient according to the approved rules of science, and, having done this, flatters himself that he has done all that is required, neglecting altogether his other essential duties, namely, to visit his patient afterwards, to see what effect the remedy has produced. It may have woefully failed; his anticipations, perhaps, being too strong or too inert, or there may have been some peculiar idiosyncracy in his patient's constitution, which rendered the medicine positively injurious. Where, then, is the man, we

would ask, that could place any confidence in this physician ?—or where is the physician that could hope to cure any of those ills which "flesh is heir to" by acting thus? As this holds good in the natural world, we also affirm that it holds good in the spiritual. A sermon such as the above cannot be delivered without producing very different effects. The denunciation of the *law* against sinners, and the free offer of pardon to the most hardened wretch, "delivered with thundering peals of eloquence," may produce in some great terror at the stern justice and severity of the law, and make them believe that the Almighty is a God of vengeance, having no mercy, for, as yet, they may be ignorant of His tempering justice with love and mercy, and, therefore, they may believe it absolutely impossible to serve God acceptably, and so absent themselves from the church. Again, in the latter case, the same, or nearly similar effects, may be produced ; and, as one fact is worth a million of theories, we will here quote the following anecdote from the life of that eminent minister, now in glory, the Rev. G. Whitefield :—

"It happened one Saturday morning that some ladies paid a visit to Lady Huntingdon, of whom she inquired, during the course of conversation, if they had ever heard Mr. Whitefield preach. On their answering 'they had not,' she informed them where he was to preach upon the ensuing evening, and advised them to repair thither. They attended, and on Mon-

day morning her ladyship inquired of them, 'How they liked Mr. Whitefield?' 'Oh, not at all,' was the prompt reply. 'Of all the preachers we ever heard, he is the most strange and unaccountable. Among other preposterous things—would your ladyship believe it?—he declared that Jesus Christ was so willing to receive sinners, that he did not object to receive even the devil's *castaway*. Now, my lady, did you ever hear of such a thing since you were born?' 'There is something, I acknowledge,' replied Lady Huntingdon, 'a little singular in the invitation, and I do not recollect to have ever met with it before; but, as Mr. Whitefield is below in the parlour, we will have him up, and let him answer for himself.' He was accordingly called, and, on entering the drawing-room, Lady Huntingdon thus addressed him—'Mr. Whitefield, these ladies have been preferring a very heavy charge against you, and I thought it best that you should come up and defend yourself. They say that, in your sermon last evening, speaking of the willingness of Jesus Christ to save sinners, you expressed yourself in the following terms—So ready is Christ to receive sinners who come to Him, that He is ready to receive the devil's castaways.' To this he replied, 'I certainly, my lady, must plead guilty to the charge. Whether I did right, or otherwise, your ladyship shall judge from the following circumstance—Did your ladyship notice, about half-an-hour ago, a very madest single rap at the door? It was given by a poor, miserable-looking, aged female, who requested to speak with me. I desired her to be shown into the parlour, when she accosted me in the following manner—'I believe, Sir, you preached last evening at such a chapel?' 'Yes, I did.' 'Ah, Sir, I was accidentally passing the door of that chapel, and hearing the voice of some one preaching, I did what I never have been in the habit of doing, I went in, and one of the first things I heard you say was, that Jesus Christ was so willing to receive sinners, that He did not object to receive the devil's castaways. Now, Sir, I have been on the town for many years, and am so worn out in his service,

that I think I may with truth be called one of the devil's castaways. Do you think, Sir, that Jesus Christ would receive me?' 'I assured her there was no doubt of it, if she was but willing to go to Him.' Such was Whitefield's ready and homely reply, to which no answer could be made. It is only necessary to add, respecting the poor, inquiring *castaway*, that she gave every evidence of being received indeed, by becoming a penitent, lowly, and devoted Christian."

Hence, then, we see the necessity of pastoral visits, whereby anxious or dismayed souls may be quieted and enlightened, and brought to see how the law, though imperative, is abrogated by the death of Christ. Some will, perhaps, say that this can be done in the pulpit, and we admit it, but there is nothing like striking the iron when it is hot, if we wish to make an impression; and, moreover, in a personal interview, individuals may receive information upon the very subject which perplexes them, and have light instantly communicated. Pastoral visitation formed quite a prominent feature in the ministry of Mr. Wilson. He was not satisfied with merely preaching a sermon to his people on the Sabbath. The church was his ministerial laboratory, wherein, by a species of spiritual chemistry, he exhibited all the intricate workings of the Holy Spirit in fusing down carnal and worldly compounds into a holy and heavenly state, of "dying unto sin and living unto righteousness;" wherein he also faithfully pourtrayed the horrible nature of sin, with all its ramifications and operations in the human

bosom, and the awful results of a life of wickedness, and afterwards he regularly visited his flock, to see, if possible, what effects this had produced, and to give advice and comfort accordingly. Two days in each week he zealously set apart for this important object, and prayed almost with every family upon whom he called—a practice highly commendable, but sadly neglected in the present day by the generality of ministers in their pastoral calls. The political affairsof the nation—the panic in the railway world—the present state of foreign nations—are the themes upon which too many principally converse, and then take their leave. Thus, instead of leading the mind from earth to heaven, and joining with the family there, beseeching Heaven to protect them from the snares of this world, and to comfort them in all their trials and sorrows, they leave behind them an impression that religion is something like their Sabbath gown — a thing which can be put off and on as occasion requires. We lament that we are obliged thus to speak, and our only object is to arouse attention to this necessary duty, as we are convinced that, if it were more generally practised, religion and the Church of Christ would flourish better. Now, Mr. Wilson detested from his heart the barren idea of a public and private morality. He maintained that ministers ought to observe the same morality in the family and social circle which

they preached from the pulpit, "letting their light shine before men." It was impossible not to have seen this largely displayed in Mr. Wilson's own character. The singleness, genuineness, and sterling nature of his loving and Christian heart and disposition, actuated and governed by the deep-toned piety which dwelt within, made him assume the same character and conduct both in public and private, and rendered him, at all times, a most welcome guest at his people's homes.

The following is a letter which he addressed to a student who was about to enter the ministry, and, as it treats upon this subject of pastoral visits, we will here introduce it. The whole is well worth a careful perusal; indeed, it is a most important letter—every sentence is pregnant with excellent advice, and breathes the very spirit of its author. We would particularly call the attention of candidates and students for the ministry to its precious contents. The experience of an old veteran general upon the stratigies of warfare is invaluable to the young officer, and surely the counsel of a veteran in the army of the church militant, who died with his armour on, in the thickest of the battle, ought to be a treasure to his brethren, who are contending, or will have to contend on the same field, and with the same enemies against whom he waged war valiantly and successfully.

"TOWNSEND STREET MANSE, BELFAST,
May 12, 1844.

"MY DEAR ——. You have entered on a very important work; important as a preparatory work for your ulterior design as to the ministry, and important with regard to its effect on the precious souls around you. I do not at all feel myself so adequate to give you counsel as you suppose. The truth is, I feel every day that I am but a learner; that if I had the work of last month to begin now, I would try to do it much better than it was done. Still we are to help one another in the work of the Lord. My first advice to you is to study accurately and prayerfully the Epistle of Paul to young Timothy. Indeed, I think if you have not done so, you should commit it to memory. Read also 'Baxter's Reformed Pastor.' It is a very precious book, and will do your mind much good. The work in which you are now engaged will bring you into close contact with sin in its seductive and its disgusting forms. Remember the words—Oh never forget them!—'Keep thyself pure,' 'flee also youthful lusts,' "exercise thyself unto godliness." Beware of uttering what you do not *feel* in your own heart; of going beyond your depth, lest you should harden your own soul. Do all in prayer, and God will astonish you by the facilities he will present to you in your work, by many and unexpected openings of usefulness. I think you should never go out to visit without a little stock of tracts—the little tracts for children (a picture on each of them), and the larger for adults; only lend them, to be given to you at your next visit. Talk a little about their contents—they have been the means of doing great good. I would pray, if possible, in every house. There are times when you cannot get an opportunity, but I would, if practicable, join prayer with the reading of the Word. Take care of a sameness in your prayers. When I pray, perhaps fifteen times in one morning, I feel a monotony in the exercise, and sometimes a formality that is injurious to

my own mind. I resist this by keeping, if possible, a different subject of conversation and prayer before my mind in each house. Thus, for instance, I turn my attention almost wholly to the Sabbath, in talking and praying in one place; in another house, to the subject of prayer; in another to parental duties; and, again, to some prevailing sins. Thus my mind is variously occupied. There is a novelty and freshness about every new subject, and I am busily engaged in learning—in expanding every thought—while I am instructing others, and seeking their sanctification. Many ministers complain of the sameness, and consequent drudgery of visiting. In this way I find it to be a pleasing and profitable engagement. Beware of losing your time in the house when you enter. It would seem to me that before Christ partook of food in the house of Martha and Mary, He and Mary were alone, engaged about Divine things: and when you have spoken to the people and prayed with them, beware of even one word of common, light, or trifling conversation. One sentence of such conversation before you come out of the house would ruin all you had done. The last words before you leave should, if possible, be the most solemn you have uttered in the family. Take a deep interest in the young. Ask them to commit to memory a psalm, or chapter, or part of a chapter; and mark it down, and do not neglect to hear the child when you return. Controvert none with the people about politics, secular or ecclesiastical, or about polemics. Be patient—be gentle—'the servant of the Lord should not strive.' A soft answer will win its way to the heart, when the battering-ram of argument will be stoutly resisted. In this respect imitate the Son of God. When you meet with your fellow-workers, to whom you refer in any meeting, be humble. 'Esteem others better than yourself;' 'God giveth grace to the humble.' Oh trust in the Lord at all times. Never trust in yourself. I shall be glad to hear how you get on. I wish you all prosperity. All well here.

"Your affectionate uncle,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

When he came to London, he was told that his pastoral visits would not be relished, as the people in that mighty vortex of worldliness were always too busy to receive him ; but in his life there, he proved this to be without the shadow of a foundation, and fully showed that it entirely depended upon the manner in which these visits were made, whether they proved acceptable or not. Indeed, there was something so winning and overcoming in the manner in which he managed them, that we always felt sorry after he was gone. In his presence time seemed to fly. His conversation was very captivating, and his whole demeanour very pleasing. On all these occasions he had a peculiar and happy talent of introducing religion, which, instead of coming upon us like an unwelcome visitor, we received it with admiration and cordiality. There was none of that *positive* repulsiveness in his nature which makes us feel very shy in the presence of some men. He was, on the contrary, all attractiveness, and drew all hearts towards him. Neither was there any of that stoic and ascetic look and behaviour in his conduct, which is sometimes assumed by ministers in their pastoral visits, and which often leads us to look upon them as only armed with the thunders of Sinai, thereby totally eclipsing their grand mission of offering pardon and reconciliation through the blood of Christ. We never recollect seeing him in a dull mood. He exemplified John Bunyan's Christian :

"went on his way rejoicing," after he had got his burden removed, showing that

"True piety was cheerful as the day."

We believe it requires a minister to exercise a discriminating judgment, in order that he may be enabled to visit in an acceptable manner the merchant in his counting-house, the artizan at his work, or the refined lady reposing in silken ease upon her couch, which none but a discerner of character, and one that is possessed of Christian discretion, can accomplish. Now, Mr. Wilson, in his pastoral visits, was singularly happy in adapting his style and method of address to all ranks and classes of his people. The child-like simplicity of his nature, and the playfulness of his spirits, rendered him a peculiar favourite, even with the children.

"The children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile"

By his success in these pastoral visits, he has set an example in London which we hope others will follow. About a year after he came to London, in a letter already given, which he wrote to a friend, after mentioning his success there, he exclaims—and, "though dead, he yet speaketh"—"LONDON IS AWFULLY IN WANT OF PASTORS WHO WILL VISIT THEIR FLOCKS."

The amazing nature of the labour which these

visits entailed upon him, and his devotedness in prosecuting them, will be readily seen by the following remarks of the Rev. John Weir, who followed him in his charges, both in Belfast and River Terrace :—

"When his book for pastoral visitation was put into my hand (Mr. Weir is speaking of Belfast), I found that there were families and individuals scattered over 110 separate streets and districts, some of them at a very considerable distance from the church, but the people from them all attended with the most exemplary regularity. It is probable that his flock numbered, old and young, between 3,000 and 4,000 souls. The average attendance was 1,200 persons, and the number of regular communicants was about 500. The toil of the pastoral visitation may be judged of when I state that one pew, containing six, or, at most, eight sittings, would be generally let to four or five separate families or persons, and that each of these, even a single individual in lodgings, was sure to have the same attention as the largest families. Besides, the people were generally of the class employed in factories and mills ; and a great deal of sickness almost constantly prevailed among them, which required from Mr. Wilson, and received from him, the most incessant attention. Indeed, when these things are remembered, in connexion with the fact, that he had collected, by his own energetic system of 'moral excavation,' the largest Protestant congregation in Belfast, if not in Ulster, and its members so widely scattered, as I have stated, it will be evident that his pastoral devotedness was almost unparalleled, entailing an amount of bodily labour, and mental fatigue, and anxiety, which, from my comparatively short experience in the same sphere, and my feeble attempt to follow his example, I do not hesitate to say were quite sufficient to undermine Mr. Wilson's constitution, continued as his astonishing exertions were in Belfast, for more

than nine years, followed up with equal earnestness in London."

Thus did he practise what he so forcibly and eloquently preached. In a sermon from the words, "Go near and join thyself to this chariot," Mr. Wilson said, "The Holy Spirit did not say to Philip, 'Go and stand on yonder bank, and preach AT the eunuch;' He did not say, 'Bid the eunuch get out of his carriage and come to you, and you will explain to him what he is reading.' No; the eunuch was anxious to hear, and the Spirit said, 'Go and join thyself to this chariot;' thus commanding Philip to get as close to him as possible. Brethren, I lament from my inmost soul the gulf of separation which divides, in the present day, pastor and people. Would to God that Christians would practise a more intimate union with each other; but so long as this is carefully avoided, especially by ministers, so long will the chilling blasts of satanic pride keep asunder that holy union which ought to exist between pastors and flocks, to the awful detriment of religion and the Church of Christ."

The following will show the ready manner in which he could illustrate to the anxious inquirer after salvation any subject which was puzzling him, and as the incidents occurred in one of his pastoral visits, they will form an appropriate finale to this part of our subject.

An individual was anxious to know how it was

"that the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." They were at the time sitting in the study, and Mr. Wilson's eye just caught the degree of this person hanging upon the wall, and he said, "There is your diploma, and it contains your name, and bears upon it the stamp, arms, and seal of the college to which you belong; hence, it 'beareth witness' that you have passed through all the study necessary for procuring it, and that you have been admitted a member; and, by your after life and conduct, your fellow-creatures will judge whether it is so. You will, if a true member, obey its laws, do nothing to dishonour it, and take delight in its service. Now, when you are admitted a member of the family of God by adoption, justification, and sanctification, your conduct will 'bear witness' that the Spirit of God is within you; you will delight to conform to the mind and will of God, be afraid to do anything which would be likely to bring dishonour upon the family of God, and delight to be called after its name; hence, your conduct in both cases will prove whether you are a real member of the college or a disciple of Christ, 'for we judge of a tree by the fruit it bears.'"

Another individual asked him "if he thought it possible to live without sin?" He replied, "No; for a man may present all the external appearance of a Christian and still be a sinner. Now," said he, casting his eyes round the room, and looking

very cheerful, "this room looks particularly clean, and, no doubt, it has been well swept and brushed this morning; but, I dare say, if I were to examine into every crevice and corner, I might find a cobweb here, and a little dust there, which have escaped the vigilance of the duster. It is just so with the human heart, for our connexion with this world, even after we have done our best, renders it absolutely impossible to live without sin. After all our prayers, there will always be found some of its dross polluting our souls, and it is only by looking to Christ that we are holy in God's sight. When I hear a man affirm that he can live without sin, I look upon such a saying as a sure mark of a hypocrite."

We know for a fact that both of these individuals were much struck with the plain and excellent style of his explanation in these instances, and the former was enabled to see clearly, for the first time, the nature of "Enoch walking with God," while the latter humbled his self-confident nature, and his prayer now is, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

These two cases fully prove the usefulness of pastoral visits, and distinctly show that much good results from them. This is what we *emphatically* call "confirming the saints," or real "*confirmation.*"

CHAPTER III.

HIS PIONEERING LABOURS.

We now come to consider his pioneering, or, as Dr. Chalmers would have termed them, his "excavating" labours, and we think that these will be best understood by merely reciting a few instances, as showing the manner in which they were managed. In the year 1825, when he was in Drogheda, he was sent by the Secession Home Mission to Galway, in the West of Ireland, to pioneer for Presbyterianism.

He entered this benighted and Popish town a perfect stranger, without knowing a soul in it, or having any introduction; but he who truly wishes the welfare and happiness of mankind will soon discover some method of advancing it, and so it proved in this case, as Mr. Wilson's ever-active and generous mind soon suggested a plan to accomplish his mission. He arrived in the town late in the evening, and, by inquiry, discovered that a Scotch regiment was in the garrison, and, on the same evening, he hurried off to the barracks, and asked the sentinel "if Sergeant M'——" here he hesitated, in order that the sentinel might suppose that he had forgotten the name, and,

perhaps, would suggest it to him. A mutual pause and astonishment seized both parties, and they eyed each other with anxious suspense ; at last the sentinel broke silence, and said, " Is it Sergeant M'Donald you want, Sir ?" By this Mr. Wilson got out of his dilemma, and directly said, " Yes ; that is the very man I want, can I see him ?" The sergeant came, and looked very suspiciously at Mr. Wilson, who was rolled up in his cloak, as the evening was very cold. Mr. Wilson apologized for calling at so late an hour, and introduced himself and the object of his mission—intimated that he would preach on to-morrow, and hoped that he would have the pleasure of seeing the sergeant and soldiers. The sergeant thanked him for his visit and information, and parted, without making any promises of compliance. The Methodists kindly lent Mr. Wilson their chapel for the occasion, and at the hour for commencing worship—it being notified in the morning by placards—a detachment of soldiers were seen, and the loud simultaneous clamp of their feet was heard marching to the chapel.

Some officers attended, and great numbers of the townspeople also. Indeed, the chapel was crowded with representatives of mostly all denominations, all anxious to see and hear a Presbyterian minister, as the very name in this Popish town created quite a sensation. On the following morning, according to appointment, the sergeant

called upon Mr. Wilson, and they started off to visit a Scotch family who were residing in Galway. They were shown into the parlour, and Mr. Wilson saw upon a table a little pile of books, composed of a large family Bible, forming a basis, "Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress," "Hervey's Meditations," Baxter's works, and some other religious publications. Now, thought Mr. Wilson, I am in the right place. This was the only Scotch family in Galway. As the results of his visit to this town, a missionary station was established, and soon afterwards a church built, in which the Gospel is now faithfully preached.

When he came to River Terrace Church, he set himself in right good earnest to find out the Irish and Scotch Presbyterians in Islington and its neighbourhood, as he felt convinced that there were hundreds of them who had forsaken the religion of their fathers since they came to London, and mixed with its tumultuous throng. This he found verified, as he came upon numbers who had given up attending any place of worship. In some of these exploratory visits he was most warmly received, and numbers were ready to clasp him to their bosoms as their best friend. Others met him with a repulsive air, and considered him intrusive, in calling upon them unsolicited. However, in the majority of instances, this first flush of mistaken dignity and pompous etiquette was soon subdued, when they saw the unmistakeable sincerity and

good intention of the visitor. As the manner in which he made those visits may be interesting, we shall relate one or two instances, showing the way in which he managed them, just as we had them from his own lips, prefacing them by merely observing that, as in Galway and Manchester, he had no clue to their residence, or religious persuasion, except the names on the doors and sign-boards, as they appeared to indicate either Irish or Scotch extraction. "One morning," says he, "In going my visiting rounds, I happened to observe a large lamp projecting from the corner of a house, with —— M'—— upon it. Certainly thought I, he must be a Scotchman, so I'll just pop in and see if I am right. I turned round the corner, and then I saw that he had a shop, and I walked in and inquired if —— was at home. A young man said, he would inquire; and he presently came back, and asked me to walk into a room off the shop. Directly a middle-aged, jolly-looking man, came in. We simultaneously greeted each other with a profound bow. I then introduced myself, making an apology for troubling him, and stated that, as I was passing along the street, his name on the lamp attracted my attention, and I fancied that he was a Scotchman, and very probably a Presbyterian. I saw a storm, said Mr. Wilson, gathering on his brow, and I half wished myself on the street again. Oh, said he, you are like many other fools, you

fancy that the streets of London are paved with gold, and that you will soon become a great man here ; I can tell you, you'll soon wish that you had never left Belfast. I saw he was out of humour, and I said, pardon me, ——. I confess that I have intruded upon you ; but just allow me to remark, that, so far from fancying what you have mentioned, I trust that higher and more noble motives have prompted me to come here ; my object is to preach to my fellow-creatures that the 'blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.' After this there was a slight pause, and I was about to bid him good morning, when he asked me to sit down, for until now we had remained on our legs. I complied, and we afterwards got on charmingly." Suffice it to say, that Mr. Wilson stopped and lunched with the family ; found out that they were Scotch Presbyterians, but had, for a number of years, been in the habit of going only occasionally to a place of worship. On the following Sabbath the whole family came to River Terrace Church, and soon afterwards became members.

We could easily narrate numerous instances similar to the above, but we will allow the following to suffice :—On coming home one day he saw on a window a name which left no doubt on his mind as to its being Scotch, so in he went, and introduced himself. The gentleman was delighted to see him, though a perfect stranger to him, and offered him the best of everything, which Mr.

Wilson politely declined. This person was a Presbyterian, but, since he came to London, had not been in the habit of attending any place of worship. The following Sabbath, however, found him in River Terrace, and he continued to attend for some time, until the rousing sermons of Mr. Wilson had "almost persuaded him to be a Christian;" but, not having the desire to renounce his former evil ways, he left off attending church, saying, "That Mr. Wilson's sermons were TOO *probing*." Poor man! the day of final retribution will show whether they were too probing or not.

Some may, perhaps, think that these visits were rather intrusive, and sprung from a selfish motive; but we can truly affirm, that nothing but a love for that church to which he belonged, and an ardent desire to gather into its fold all the wandering sheep which had strayed therefrom, actuated him in thus storming the dwellings of strangers. No work, however unpleasant in its nature, daunted his indomitable spirit, when duty demanded him to execute it. He was not satisfied with merely giving an invitation to sinners from the pulpit, but went out into the highways and thoroughfares, and entreated people to come out to church, that good might be done to their souls.

Whilst on this topic, it may be well to notice that his success in these visits sometimes exposed him to injurious reflections. We lament to think that his *purely* disinterested spirit, and magnanimously

missionary zeal in these instances, should suffer by being misinterpreted. We have reason to believe that he never *directly* or *indirectly willingly influenced* any to leave their own church and join his. If he found that those whom he visited were in the habit of regularly attending any place of worship, he never interfered with them. But if he perceived that they were very irregular in their attendance, or that their minds were not favourably disposed towards the denomination with which they occasionally worshipped, then, indeed, the invitation was cheerfully and willingly given, " To come and hear him." We are aware that numbers left other churches to sit under his ministry, and we are inclined to applaud them for it, as the reason of their doing so was simply that they found him to be very expert in probing their corrupt and diseased natures, and that he was also an adept at pointing out to them the " *Therapeutica Sacra*" for their cure.

In the year 1845 he was in Bristol, and in a short time found out thirty families of Presbyterians. Similar success attended his excavatory labours in Hull, Lewis, and Colchester; but his endeavours to establish Presbyterian churches in these towns did not meet with that encouragement from his brethren in the ministry which he expected, and he was therefore obliged to give up his intentions. Indeed, it is our deliberate opinion, that his ideas of ingathering a church were one

hundred years before the age in which he lived, and that, had he met with assistance and encouragement, he would have had erected, in a very few years, a Presbyterian church in all the large towns in England. Dr. Hamilton says:—"He was a punctual attendant on Presbytery meetings, and into every movement calculated to extend our CHURCH IN ENGLAND he threw his whole heart and soul. It was his continual vexation that we had not resources or enterprise sufficient to occupy all the inviting fields which his zeal had discovered, and of which his promptitude would have taken instant possession." He knew well the English character, and, we believe, that the great secret of his success with them just lay in this, that he was ready to give up minor points and formalities, which did not contain anything of importance, such as sitting during the time of singing, when he found that they were not relished by the English. In fact, "he became all things to all men, so that he might gain some." "I am confident," he says, "that if we had active, zealous, and *visiting* ministers planted in all the great towns of England, or even in those of moderate size, we would soon have flourishing congregations. The error in past years has been to call our church a Scotch church, and to sing only Scotch tunes, thus leaving an impression on the minds of good people that our Presbyterianism is only fit for Scotchmen. I am happy to inform

you, that River Terrace is an exception to this, as the *half* of our people are English, and many of them truly pious." Entertaining these ideas, he would not allow River Terrace Church to be designated by any other name, after he came to London, than "English Presbyterian Church."

His labours during his short, but exemplary career in England, were not confined to his own church. No ; his Christian and philanthropic soul was ready, at all times, to aid any movement which had for its object the extension of Christ's kingdom, and the happiness of his fellow-mortals, either by his personal influence or pecuniary contributions. Hence, witness his unsectarian spirit—see him one day in the pulpit of a Baptist,* on another in that of a Wesleyan, and on another in that of an Independent, lending his whole influence to advance the catholic church of Christ. See him again mixing with all denominations on a common religious platform, not crying out, as some of our would-be religionists in the present day, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we ;" but determined to "know nothing among men, but Jesus Christ and Him crucified." England was his parish, and during his brief labours there, his sound went forth into all its corners, and "His name was in all the churches." In fact, so familiar had his name

* The year in which he died, he was engaged to preach the annual sermon for the Baptists.

become to all sections of the Christian church, that we look in vain to the records of ministerial life in England, to find a *similar* instance of such rapid progress in the general estimation of the religious public.

Dr. Hamilton bears testimony to the generous character of his Christianity, as follows. In a letter addressed to the writer, he says :—

"And here I must not omit one beautiful trait in his character. Like a true Presbyterian, he looked not on his own congregation only, but with almost equal interest on the congregations of others. Beyond most ministers he realized that peculiarity of our system—one church and many congregations. 'The people of London Wall and Regent's Square,' he would say, 'Are as much my people as the people of River Terrace.' And the delight with which he marked the increase of the body, showed that this saying was his real sentiment."

CHAPTER IV.

GENERAL CHARACTER.

We shall now endeavour to lay before our readers a general view of his character, and we believe that this will be best accomplished by publishing some of his letters, as the warm and overflowing nature of his mind and disposition will be seen in almost every sentence. The following was addressed to a young gentleman belonging to his congregation :—

"River Terrace, London, *July* 11, 1846.

"My dear J——. I have heard with very great pleasure that you are thoroughly engrossed with the study of chemistry. It has gratified me much, I assure you, to hear that you are so pleasingly and so busily engaged in the study of a science so interesting, and one, at the same time, which you are likely to turn to such practical account in your future life ; and I have no doubt but when your mind is engrossed with one pursuit, like chemistry, it will open up your way to the cultivation of the mind on other subjects of vast importance. I would suggest to you that if you could get an opportunity of hearing lectures on astronomy, or natural philosophy, you should by all means embrace it. These studies expand the mind, and, by producing mental effort, they strengthen the mental powers; and this will enable you to direct your thoughts to any proper business with greater success. A person with a sluggish and uncultivated mind is not likely to excel in any department of life, and a man of an active and enterprising mind is most likely to rise to the highest

point of excellence. Above all, my dear young friend, seek for the knowledge 'that cometh from above,' which is 'pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.' The knowledge of God, as a reconciled Father, is above all other knowledge. To know that God is yours—not a Judge to condemn or accuse you, but a Father to guide, protect, and love you—to know that Jesus Christ is your elder brother, your intercessor, pleading for you at the right hand of God—to know that the Holy Ghost is your sanctifier—above all, to feel that the Spirit of God is abiding in you as in a consecrated temple—this is the excellency of the Lord Jesus Christ. Let nothing lift your mind from the pursuit and study of this knowledge. A philosopher may have the knowledge of all earthly sciences, and be a fool in the sight of God; but, on the other hand, if you enter on, and pursue your present studies, in a prayerful, spiritual, mental frame, then these sciences will prove handmaids to piety; and, while you thus study the works of Nature, you will gain more enlarged views of that great God, who is seen by the true philosopher in all His works and in all events, as well as in His blessed Word. My dear J., never neglect your seasons for devotion. Have your time fixed for the reading and study of the Word and for prayer. See that nothing be allowed to encroach on that precious time. Guard it as the most sacred and important portion of your day's existence. You are only in a right frame when you have this sacred exercise, and long for your hour of secret prayer and Bible meditation. Oh that your heart may thus be fortified by the grace of God—that deep and solid religious principle may be rooted and grounded in your mind—and that you may grow up to be an ornament to religion, and a pillar in the house of God! Put the question often to yourself, Am I a child of God? Has the Holy Ghost regenerated my precious soul? Do I hate sin in all its forms—and do I, indeed, love the Lord Jesus Christ? Oh, what consolation I should feel if you could write to me, and say, 'Yes; I trust the Holy

Spirit is working a good work in me, changing my nature and preparing me for heaven.' Remember me very affectionately to all friends. I trust your father is rather better; he is at Herne Bay just now. His weakness should draw you all the more to your Father in heaven. Write me a long letter; it will gratify me much to hear from you.

"Ever yours, affectionately,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

Notwithstanding the multiplicity of his duties, he never forgot former friends, and some of his letters to them breathe the most tender solicitude for their comfort and welfare. In writing to Mrs. Crooks, of Drogheda, he says—

"I do believe that I can say of Drogheda what the Psalmist said of Zion, 'If I forget thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, let my right hand forget its cunning.' But the truth is, I am so much carried about by the multiplicity of my labours, ordinary and extraordinary, that I have almost no time for anything but direct duty. In that I have real enjoyment, and the Lord, I trust, is giving me some spiritual success."

At the close of the year 1846, he writes the following letter to the same lady:—

"ISLINGTON, LONDON, *December* 24, 1846.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—We are drawing near the end of another year, and, in looking over the names of friends, dearly beloved, whom I knew, and among whom I exercised my poor ministry, I find many a distressing blank, but some are still mercifully preserved by a tender Father. Among these, how kind and gracious has God been to you. Though you do not often receive letters from me, be assured you are not forgotten. When supplicating for friends, you are often vividly

before the eye of my mind at a throne of grace. What an infinite comfort that, though we may be separated as to the bodily presence, we can meet day after day in the fellowship of family and closet devotion, and hold the closest and strictest discourse at the altar of God. There may you find your most hallowed joys, and breathe out your soul in elevated aspirations; and there may God meet with you, and say, as with audible voice, 'I am thine, thou art mine; and there may you sweetly respond, 'My Beloved is mine, and I am His.' No doubt, beloved friend, your body feels the weakening effects of old age, but how blessed in such a case to be 'strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man;' and, 'when flesh and heart faint and fail,' to know and to feel that God is the 'strength of your heart and your portion;' and, when the Christian feels the body weak and the mind enfeebled, oh, what a source of joy that we have one who has borne our burden, atoned for our guilt, finished transgression, wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness; and when we feel ourselves unable to kneel in prayer, how consoling to think that our 'Elder Brother' is engaged for us at His Father's right hand, pleading our cause, presenting our feeble supplications to a God who is pleased with us for the sake, and on the account of His dear Son. This is the inheritance at present of all the saints. May it be yours, and then you have the peace of God that passeth all understanding—a hope that will cheer you in the evening of your days, and a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory. When we get to heaven, sickness, and feebleness, and old age will all vanish away. We shall renew our years and enjoy immortal youth. Sorrow and sighing will be exchanged for one uninterrupted song of praise, and, instead of the poverty and death that abound, we shall dwell among an innumerable multitude of saints, each one wearing a crown of celestial glory, holding a palm of victory, and robed in a blood-washed raiment, happy with Christ, and happy with each other for evermore! My wish is

—my earnest prayer is—that this ineffable joy may be all your own. Remember me very affectionately to all dear friends. Their names are on my heart, though there is not room for them on my paper. Oh that they may all mingle in the society of the blessed in the golden streets of the city of our God!

"Ever yours,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

The following are some letters which he addressed to his daughter, during his temporary absence from home. They will show that his paternal love for his offspring was great. The first is dated—

"ABERDEEN, *April* 27, 1840.

"MY DEAR A——. When I read your note, I offered up a very fervent prayer to your infinitely better Father in heaven, that He would send down the spirit of His Son into your young heart, to make you early a child of God, even a daughter of the Lord Almighty. Oh, if I could think that Christ really has your young affections, that you are resolved to love Him above all things, to serve Him with all ardour and sincerity, to hate all that Christ hates, to love all that Christ loves, then your father's mind would be at peace regarding you, and he would love you with still more devoted attachment. Remember, dear daughter, oh, do remember it, when you bow your knee before God, that 'except you be converted, born again, and become as a little child, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'"

In the year 1842, Miss Wilson was in London, and she wrote home, telling her father of all the grandeur and magnificence which she saw in that world in miniature. Fearing that these gorgeous

scenes of apparent terrestrial glory and happiness might have an injurious effect upon her young mind, he wrote to her as follows—directing her mind to that far more glorious and permanent city, even heaven :—

"TOWNSEND STREET MANSE, *May* 23, 1842.

"MY DEAREST A——. It is interesting to see those who are wielding the sceptre over the greatest empire in the world, and whose sway is felt to the very ends of the earth. When you were passing through Hyde Park and Regent Street, I could not help thinking how much more glorious that city will be, to which, I trust, your young heart is now soaring, the foundations of which are garnished with all manner of precious stones, the walls of jaspar, and the streets of pure gold. There you shall see no sun, or moon, nor lamp, but the Lord God and the Lamb shall be the light of it, and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory and honour into it."

We shall give another, as it contains advice of a most important nature, which we could heartily wish to see more generally urged by parents upon their children, and observed by all young ladies in these days of soul-destroying novels, which carry within their leaves the moral contagion of lasciviousness and general corruption, and, like the fatal blasts of the sirocco, waft their deadly plague over all the land, and even carry it into the very bosoms of peaceful homes and families. This letter is dated—

"BELFAST, TOWNSEND STREET MANSE,
June 30, 1842.

"MY BELOVED A——. Though I have only a very short time

on hand, yet, in the midst of my bustle, I shall gratify myself by writing at least a few lines to my much-loved daughter. All your letters, though addressed to your mamma, with the exception of one, I look on as common property, and make them my own. It delights me to find that you have enjoyment in reading 'Blair's Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres.' At one time it was thought hardly possible for any one of refined taste to be ignorant of their contents, and I shall suppose there is great truth in the observation. It is considered a work perfect in the department of literature of which it treats; but I should say, at the same time, that no person ever can be an elegant writer merely from reading Blair. You must practise as well as read—that is, you must compose, and in your composition try to embody his rules, and bring out specimens of his figures, &c., and then you can only benefit by the study of these inestimable lectures. At the same time, there is a book of higher polish, of greater beauty, of more true sublimity even than Blair—I mean the Book of God. If you desire the most interesting biography, the most vivid descriptive writing, the most useful precept, the weightiest doctrine, the most celestial soaring of the inspired muse, the only pathway to heaven, sketched in living reality, then study the Bible. Never be satisfied till you are thoroughly acquainted with all its great facts and cheering promises. It has guided many a wandering sinner in duty—it has upheld them in trial, and imparted life in death. Let your Bible ever be your greatest ornament. Let its spirit and truths find ready access into my dear daughter's heart. Nothing would rejoice me so much as to know that this is really the case."

The following is a letter, addressed to Mrs. Wilson when she was in Paisley attending the demise of her father. It needs no preface, as it speaks for itself:—

"DROGHEDA, *October* 29, 1835.

"MY DEAREST M——. I only got home to-day from my father's, and, on my arrival, had a letter from you, and one from Mrs. Carlile. From what you have written respecting the venerated patient, I am much rejoiced that you have gone. If your presence, or anything you can say to him at such a time, be the smallest consolation to him, surely it is what such a parent has a peculiar right to expect; and no fatigue of travelling, or absence from home, is, for a moment, to be thought of. It must be very interesting to be near his bed—to see, in living reality, the truth of our holy religion exhibited in the support he receives from on High, and in the resignation and patience he is now enabled to maintain. I do earnestly pray that the good Lord may cause patience to have its perfect work in his soul, and that the love of God may be shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given to him; that his confidence in his Redeemer may be uninterrupted, and his joy unchanging and strengthening to his own mind. I am not surprised at that uncomfortable period through which he has been called to pass. The best of God's children have had such seasons of mental gloom and doubt with regard to the goodness of God. But why should not the servant be thus tried, when our Lord and Master had to cry out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Those dark seasons are intended to humble the soul; to convince us that while on earth, even with the holiest spirit, there is still some remaining work to be done, to wean from all below, and produce strong desires for that place where all distance and darkness will be at an end, and where the Lamb will be seen face to face. But, oh, who can conceive what will then be felt! 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for those that love Him.' These doubts should entirely be removed from your dear father's mind by the following thoughts or questions:—Does he not hate sin, because it is exceedingly sinful and odious to God, dishonourable to the Saviour, and

ruinous to man's precious soul? Does he not love the ordinances of praise and prayer, the preaching and reading of God's holy Word? Is he not willing to lie in the hands of God, knowing that He is a wise and most merciful Father, and that all His dispensations are in truth, mercy, and wisdom, to His own children? and is He not filled with gratitude for all Heaven's mercies to him as to the things of time and eternity, as to himself and the various members of his family? These questions he can answer in the affirmative. Then let not Satan cast any doubt over his spirit. None but a child of God ever yet could answer these questions. The following passages of Scripture, I am sure, will be dear to his heart. 'Greater is He that is for you than all who can be against you.' 'I will give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hands. My Father that gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands.' 'The mountains may depart, and the hills be removed, but my loving-kindness will not depart from thee, nor will I suffer the covenant of my peace to be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.' Oh that the Spirit may enable him to drink deeply into these sweet promises! I shall be very anxious to hear again regarding him. My father seemed to feel very much when I told him of his illness. He is also in his eighty-fourth or eighty-fifth year. Both he and my mother are very feeble, and I feel quite satisfied they are both building on the Rock of our Salvation."

This is a letter which he wrote to Mrs. Pollock, of Dublin, after her husband's death :—

"BELFAST, *10th Oct.*, 1836.

"MY DEAR AND AFFLICTED FRIEND,—You may not, perhaps, be expecting a letter from me, but I really cannot resist the impulse of my mind in writing to you, and giving expression not only to my own feelings, but to Mrs. Wilson's. At the

same time, I have to confess that I find it difficult, very difficult, to let you know how much we feel for you and your family in your heavy affliction. I must acknowledge that nothing has occurred for a considerable time that I feel to be so much a personal bereavement to myself; and though I have relations in Dublin, believe me it would be a very different city to me now, when Mr. Pollock is no more. But, my dear friend, though I know you must feel your calamity to be very overwhelming, yet I trust you do 'not sorrow as one that has no hope.' There is much observation directed toward you in heaven and on earth. The God who has so long filled your cup with much comfort, is now beholding with what spirit you can drink the cup of deep distress which, in His adorable wisdom, He has put into your hands. Many of the Lord's people will watch with intense anxiety to see and to hear how a sister in Christ is bearing up under the out-stretched hand of a chastising Father. Oh that you may be enabled to let your faith be known to all, and that all who see you may have reason to say, 'here is the patience of a saint of God.' I do acknowledge that, when I heard of the unexpected bereavement, I felt that the Lord's doing was most mysterious, and the whole circumstance has led my mind very forcibly to the death of Moses. Moses was a man pre-eminently active amongst the Israel of God—so was he who is gone. He was deeply interested in every member of the Israelitish family. And, oh how much was the tender father bound up, and intensely interested in his wife and children! Moses was taken from the Israelites at a very peculiar period of their history, when they were about to enter into Canaan. Many of them might be ready to say, 'How will we, without him, get possession of the land? What strife and discord will be without him, as to the division of the inheritance.' But God's time was the best for Moses and them. He raised up Joshua, who led them onward to the possession of the promised rest. May I hope that He, of whom Joshua was but a feeble type, that the beloved Jesus will be to you instead of a husband, and to your

children instead of a father; and that you will all experience the loss of the departed saint in some measure supplied by a more abundant outpouring of Christ's spirit, by a closer walk with God, and by the most assured trust on His Providence and grace. May I hope that my dear friend, Alexander, will take his father's place at the family altar, and be like a Joshua raised up amongst you, and will say, in the noble words of Moses's successor, 'Let others do what they may, as for me *and this house*, we will still serve the Lord.' This would do much to lighten you of your burden of sorrow, and make you to sing in the words of the psalmist, 'Surely it was good for us that we were afflicted.' I wish it was in my power to do anything that would be a comfort to you in the slightest degree. If I could do anything in this place to serve you, you have only to command my services, and it will be a real luxury to me if I can, in your present circumstances, be of any use to you. When you are in darkness and heaviness, let me entreat you to fly to the promises of God. 'Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.' I need not say that Mrs. Wilson most keenly feels for you, and ardently prays for you and yours. Believe me,

"Most affectionately yours,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

To a young member of his congregation, when absent from home:—

"RIVER TERRACE, LONDON, 15*th April*, 1846.

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,—I felt it to be wholly out of my power to call upon you before you left home for Scotland. You know my duties are multiplying very rapidly, and, as far as possible, I must not neglect any of them. I was very glad to hear that you had got to Scotland so comfortably. I trust that you will find all your friends happy and well, and this will be a source of much comfort to yourself while you are among them; and I do pray that your visit may be a great blessing

to you and to them. For this purpose, let me entreat you to avail yourself of the many precious opportunities that abound in Scotland to make yourself thoroughly acquainted with the practical working and the noble enterprises of our ecclesiastical system—our Presbyterian polity. You will likewise have opportunities of hearing many of the first ministers of the present day. This is a very great privilege, and one, I have no doubt, you will highly estimate. But I am, I assure you, equally anxious that you should do good as well as get good. And you know one of my fixed principles is, that one of the best ways to get good is to be constantly doing good. You are not too young to be a decided servant of a dear Saviour. I trust Jesus has made you feel the power of His truth and love—that you have tasted that He is gracious—then you cannot but speak for the honour of His name, according as He may give you opportunity. Alas! we lose many blessed opportunities of bearing our testimony for our Lord. When the leper was cleansed, he at once went and proclaimed the goodness, and power, and love of his great Benefactor. I do not say you should do this publicly; but when associating with your dear relations, you can drop a word about the importance of the soul, the preciousness of Christ, the worldliness of baptised Christians, the sad absence of religion in their parties, their conversation, and their general conduct. Then you can witness for Jesus by your sacred and becoming conduct on the Lord's-day—by your resistance of *senseless* amusements in company, such as dancing, cards, theatres, balls, &c. All this you should do in great tenderness to those from whom you differ, but in great firmness at the same time. You should bear your testimony in these cases in much prayer, that God would bless your efforts for the honour of His name. And, oh, my prayer for you and every young person under my ministry is, that God may early fill you with His love, and build you up, and make you all steady, ornamental, and shining Christians! Your friends here are well; your father and mother were both at church

on Sabbath. We had a very large Bible-class on Wednesday last. I shall be glad to hear from you.

"Yours ever,

"JOSIAS WILSON."

Having thus introduced several of his warm and affectionate epistles, we shall now lay before our readers some reminiscences of his general character, most of them drawn from personal knowledge and observation.

His every day character was courteous in the real sense of the word. There was none of that precision of utterance and movement in his conversation and conduct, which always attend the coxcombs of polite society, who are ever straining after effect, but who, nevertheless, are only like the speaking automaton, as they want the ease, grace, and dignity of genuine cordiality. "We allow that their manners may be abundantly correct. There may be elegance in every gesture and gracefulness in every position—not a smile out of place, and not a step that would not bear the measurement of the strictest scrutiny. This is all very fine, but what I want is the heart and *gaiety* of *social* intercourse, the *frankness* that spreads ease and animation around it, the eye that speaks *affability* to all, that chases *timidity* from *every bosom*, and tells every man in the company to be confident and happy. This is what I conceive to be the virtue of *courteousness*, and

not the sickening formality of those who walk by rule, and would reduce the whole of human life to a wirebound system of misery and constraint."* No man could draw a better portraiture of Mr. Wilson, in this respect, than is conveyed in these graphic words. They just, as it were, place him before our eyes, and we can fancy that we hear his light and buoyant step approach our door, see his cheerful countenance, whose pleasing smile chased sorrow from our hearts, his hand extended to greet us with a warm " How do you do." Truly, Mr. Wilson was the very *centre* of delightful society. Lord Jeffrey says, "That men of great powers of mind have generally been social and cheerful ;" but we would say that the *true Christian*, above all other men, has reason to be joyful and happy, as he is in possession of a joy which the world knows not of, and is enabled to look upon all the trials and troubles of this life "as not worthy to be compared" with the glory and delight which are in store for him. Hence Mr. Wilson, as he travelled thither, showed to all that religion was not calculated to cast a gloom over his spirits or damp his cheerfulness, but was, on the contrary, eminently adapted to raise his drooping spirits, and diffuse life and joy around.

It was the genuineness of his heart which made him such a favourite among the poorer, as well as the richer portion of his flocks. The following

* Dr. Chalmers.

pleasing anecdote will show the warm manner in which his memory is cherished by this class of his friends. Shortly after his death, a gentleman was standing one day in Mr. M'Comb's shop in Belfast, when a poor woman came in and whispered something to Mr. M'Comb. On her retiring, Mr. M'Comb said, "That is a poor woman who is a member of Townsend-street Church, and a great admirer of Mr. Wilson. A few days after his portrait came out, she asked me if I would give her one, stating that she would pay me by weekly instalments. I complied, and she has just been to pay me an instalment, and I am happy to say that she will soon have it all paid up." It appears that, to procure this memento of her dear departed friend, she had submitted herself to great privations. His attention and kindness to the poor were very great. He treated them with the same respect as he did the wealthier members of his church. When they called upon him, he would always introduce them into the parlour, and would listen to their tales of sorrow or joy—never showing the least impatience, or doing anything which might lead them to suppose that they were intruding upon his time.

This, we believe, is the glory of the clergy—to be gentle, courteous, and complacent to all. These are the insignia of their heavenly mission, by which they show to all that the God whom they serve is gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and truth, and nigh unto all those that call upon Him, poor and rich, for there is no difference.

When travelling on Missions, or Church business, he always observed a rigid economy. The following will prove this :—" Here I am," says he, " I stopped at Birmingham at half-past one at night, having heard that there would be a *third-class* train at six o'clock next morning, and having also seen in the railway office in London that the boat would not sail until Friday evening at six o'clock. Besides, had I come on to Liverpool from Birmingham that night, I must have left the second-class department, and have taken an unmixed *first-class* to Liverpool. So I was snoring in the railway hotel from two o'clock until five o'clock in the morning, and at six o'clock was in the *third-class* for Liverpool. I never had so pleasant a trip, and it only cost me eight shillings." In his living he also exercised a similar economy.

One evening, when he was in Belfast, he missed one of his hearers out of his accustomed pew, and directly after service was over, although he was very hot, and the evening remarkably cold and wintry, he threw his cloak about him and rushed out, without ever speaking or saying where he was going to any of his elders. Presently he came back quite delighted, and looking very cheerful, and said to his elders, who had not left the vestry, " Oh, I have had such a treat ; as I was passing such a house, I heard some one as if engaged in prayer, so I stopped and listened, and I heard such a beautiful prayer put up for me and my

congregation, which has convinced me that my labours have not been in vain." No doubt this was the residence of the missing member after whom he had gone to inquire.

Regarding his literary character, we regret to say that he wrote and published little. His time was completely occupied with the duties of his congregation and other philanthropic objects. So little time had he to devote to writing, that he was reckoned by his friends a tardy correspondent; but although thus tardy, his friends were not forgotten.

On the 22d November, 1841, in writing to a friend, he takes occasion to observe on this subject:—

"I am so completely engrossed by the multiplicity of my duties in this immense congregation, that I have little time to write more than a note even to my nearest relations. Do not suppose that, because I have not written ere this, that you are not before my mind. I think I can say, that not a single day revolves, in which the members of the Palace Street Church do not pass in review before me."

When we take into consideration the onerous duties which necessarily attend a congregation numbering nearly 4,000 souls; visiting the sick, and frequently every member of the church, whether indisposed or not; catechising the young; attending to the schools; lecturing, preaching, and its preparation; travelling on missions and church extension, together with a variety of, as he terms,

"ordinary and extraordinary duties," we are almost amazed to find that he could even procure time to write the number of letters which he did, and make the necessary preparation for his pulpit.

From a pocket-book of his which has fallen in our way, we see clearly how he managed this latter object, as it bears *prima facie* evidence that he was in the habit of noting down ideas which struck his mind as he pursued his labours. This book contains the skeletons of many an excellent discourse; and the writing of the notes is so unequal and irregular, that it proves it to have been written, substituting his knee for a writing-desk. Leisure and Mr. Wilson had taken leave of each other, as he felt a positive pleasure in all his duties. We do not know whether ministers in general are thus in the habit of noting down on the instant ideas which flash upon their minds, as they pursue their daily avocations. We certainly believe that such a method, if adopted, particularly in those thoughts which first strike the mind in the morning, when returning consciousness is opening the portals of reason, we would have more choice and rare remarks from the pulpit.

This was the habit of many great men and philosophers in all ages, among whom we may mention John Wesley. Mr. Southey relates of him, that, even in riding from one place to another, he used to throw the reins over the horse's neck and read poetry, history, and philosophy—noting down

his observations as he went along. In this way, during his life, he rode about one hundred thousand miles, without sustaining any injury of sufficient magnitude to make him sensible of the danger which he incurred.

Although we lament that time did not permit Mr. Wilson to compile a work of any literary importance, we know that he possessed a mind capable of doing so. From the specimen which we have given, it will be seen that had his energies been so directed, he would have been fully able to have taken his stand among his literary brethren. But writing and publishing were not what he was set apart for ; and if he has not left behind him a monument in writing, he has left that which, in all probability, will be more enduring and useful. In proof of this, we will point to the different *churches*, with their minarets pointing towards heaven, whither their founder has entered—the school-houses and manses which he was instrumental in building, or enlarging, in several localities—and these silent hieroglyphics will proclaim a tale of noble deeds, and from them succeeding generations will be able to trace the life and labours of Mr. Wilson, and learn lessons of zeal, perseverance, and godliness. Better far for his labours to assume this tangible and useful form, than for them to lie moth-eaten and neglected upon dusty shelves. Neither is his forming bricks and mortar into churches, however laudable and praise-

worthy it may be, the only monument of his usefulness, for he was equally successful in transforming, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, the hearts of his fellow-mortals into TEMPLES, in which the Lord delighted to dwell; and we doubt not but that, when the "Lord shall come to make up his jewels," Mr. Wilson shall have for his crown of joy and rejoicing many souls whom he had been instrumental in turning from the error of their ways. This ought to be the aim of the Christian ministry; but, alas! how often have we reason to lament its sad perversion, as numbers who take upon them the office of teaching, instead of giving themselves to the ministry of the Word, occupy their time in very different objects; and numbers shut themselves up in their studies, and spend their days and nights in poring over the ponderous and indigestible rubbish of ancient and modern lore—filling their minds with a mass of crudities, from which it is impossible to draw lessons of heavenly wisdom, for "the world by wisdom knew not God." Saint Augustine says—"In Cicero and Plato I met with many things wittily said, and things that had a moderate tendency to move the passions, but in none of them did I find these words, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'"* Mere literary resurrectionists, who accus-

* "Apud Ciceronem et Platonem aliosque ejusmodi Scriptores, multa sunt acute dicta et leniter calentia, sed in iis omnibus hoc non invenio. Venite ad me," &c. Matt. xi. 28.

tom themselves to wade through the refined subtilties and jarring opinions of the world's learning, cannot stoop to believe such a plain truth. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ," is too simple for their gigantic minds to listen to. Hence, rejecting this, they plunge into the "slough of despond," or, perhaps, wallow in the filthy mire of their own creation, and if, peradventure, they escape therefrom, it is not generally to fly to the "wicket gate," but to hew out a course for themselves which, we had almost said, invariably leads to either Infidelity, Atheism, or Rome.* Now Mr. Wilson, instead of wading through these labyrinths of human invention and ingenuity, gave up his time to the "ministry of the Word," and the study thereof, "which is able to make wise unto salvation." He believed that the Bible had God for its author—a truth which the "brilliant Frenchman" † could not believe.

"Church ladders are not always mounted best
By learned clerks, and Latinists professed;
The exalted prize demands an upward look,
Not to be found by poring on a book."

By this we do not wish to convey that Mr. Wilson was without erudition—by no means. We merely wish to show that he did not make it his study; but, instead of this, he studied that great circulatory library—the world and his Bible; and from them extracted many lessons of wisdom and general usefulness.

* Drs. Pusey and Newman, &c. † Voltaire.

Had he been spared a little longer he would have received the degree of D.D. from the Easton College, Pennsylvania, America, as his name was entered on the College list for this honour.

A peculiar trait in his character was, that as he walked along the streets he generally conversed on religious topics with the individuals whom he overtook or walked with. On one occasion he came up with an old man in one of the streets of London—

"His head was gray, and silvered o'er with age."

Mr. Wilson accosted him thus, "The hoary head is a crown of glory." He then paused, waiting to see what reply the old man would make; but he trudged on, casting a significant look at Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson then finished the sentence by saying, "if it be found in the way of righteousness." "Ah," exclaimed the old man, "I thought you had forgotten the principal part." They afterwards journeyed on, and held sweet counsel together. At another time, a friend met him in earnest conversation with a baker, who had his basket of bread on his shoulder. Mr. Wilson was explaining to him, as they walked along, the Parable of the Sower.

Who is that rather tall looking person approaching us, with a stick in his hand, and his countenance radiant with delight? About half a dozen poor men, women, and children surround

him. He seems to heed not the din of the numerous vehicles, nor do the equipages of fashion, as they sweep along, attract his attention. Curiosity prompts us, we approach nearer, and perceive he is in earnest conversation with this motley group. The din of swiftly revolving wheels, and ponderous waggons, become comparatively quiet. We listen and perceive that—

"He speaks of Him he loves—of Him whose life,
Though blameless, had incurred perpetual strife;
Whose deeds had left, in spite of hostile art,
A deep memorial graven on his heart."

And you find that he who talks is the Rev. Josias Wilson—"*Sic iter ad astra.*" Who can calculate the results of such precious and abundant labours. Way-side seed thus promiscuously scattered may chance to fall upon favourable soil, and produce fruit which, by-and-by, may yield an abundant harvest. As a companion, he was the very personification of all those qualities which render a friend delightful. He was full of vivacity and cheerfulness, though never more so than was consistent with his Christian character. In the year 1845 we left London, and well remember his first visit to us at Bexley Heath, where we then resided; and as a description of this visit will shew the agreeable, cheerful, and truly Christian nature of his society, we will introduce it. He arrived quite unexpectedly about four o'clock in the afternoon, but we were not in, having just gone out for a

walk. He ascertained from the servant whither we had gone, and directly followed us. On perceiving us coming up, he crept through the railing and hid himself in a gravel-pit by the road-side. Directly we had passed, he quietly came from his hiding-place, and gently followed us on tiptoe—came behind us without our observing him, and gave us a gentle poke on the back with his stick; we instantly turned round, and there saw our dear friend, laughing heartily at the bewilderment which his unexpected appearance created within us. After a mutual greeting, we were soon at home, and participating in

"The cup which cheers, but not inebriates."

And here, in the domestic circle, he was a welcome and delightful guest. In conversation, from the miscellaneous nature of his knowledge, he was enabled to edify the company on any topic—each enforced and illustrated by pleasing language and appropriate anecdotes. In fact, in all grades of society he was perfectly at home. He had language and address for his peers and superiors, for the mechanic and the peasant; and, in the drawing-room of the lady of etiquette, if he affected not the Chesterfield bow, his naturally easy and frank manners showed him to be formed of genuine and pliant materials, and not a piece of studied mechanism. In the evening, we took a stroll through the heath, and, during our walk, his phi-

lanthropic and missionary spirit was largely exhibited in talking, in a pleasing and religious strain, to a number of the poorer classes whom we met. We were much struck with his kind manner towards little children. He would stop, and with a happy smile upon his countenance, which at once drove away timidity from the child whom he addressed, and say, "Now, my little boy (or girl) can you tell me whither you are going?" and, after a few such simple questions, with the intention of gaining the confidence of the children, would stroke their heads and ask them some religious question, in the most bland and winning manner, such as, "Can you tell me who lives yonder?" pointing to the clouds; "Where do bad little boys and girls—who curse, tell lies, and steal, do not go to church or Sabbath-school—go when they die? and where do good little boys go when they die?" The children whom he thus addressed seemed perfectly delighted, and invariably returned him answers. He would then say, "I hope you will be a very good boy (or girl), and when you die you will go to heaven, and be happy with the Lord;" then kindly shake hands with them, and say, "Now, remember what I have told you." It was delightful to see how the little things would linger and fondly gaze upon him after he had left them; and we remarked that, after this interview, he would turn his back upon us and remain silent for a few minutes, evidently offering up a prayer that their

young hearts might be impressed with what he had said. His prayers in the family were most refreshing, and appropriate to the circumstances of each individual present. When the hour for his departure arrived, which was invariably on the following morning, as, owing to the multiplicity of his duties and engagements he could never remain longer, we felt as if our best earthly friend had forsaken us, and it left a void in our social circle, which no other individual could fill.

As a platform speaker, he was universally admired, and on these boards he possessed a most dignified and commanding appearance. When he was denouncing the errors of Rome, or any Antichristian system, or pleading the cause of missions, church extension, or any other philanthropic object, his native energy caught fire, his eye sparkled, his hand was clenched, his arm extended, and, anon, brought with a telling sweep across his breast. He stepped backwards and forwards; sometimes his body was bent forward, making, as it were, a period to the end of a most telling sentence. Again, he is quite erect, and his countenance wears a smile of withering sarcasm, which is presently changed to a sternness awfully terrific, or a smile of joy beams upon it; and during all these bodily and mental gradations, his voice is pealing like the open diapason of an organ, or stealing upon his hearers like the soul-speaking strains of the Æolian harp, causing the acquiescing

"hear, hear," the applauding "bravo," or the hearty laugh, to ring through the vast assembly.

Soon after he came to London, the Parliamentary grant to Maynooth was on the tapis, and attracting great attention from the several denominations of Protestants. We remember going to a large meeting in Islington, which was convened to petition Parliament against the grant. The chairman was the Rev. Mr. Wilson, Rector of St. Mary's, Islington; the Hon. and Rev. Baptist Noel, Dr. Bennett, and several other distinguished ministers were on the platform. About two thousand people were present, among whom were several priests. The meeting was tolerably quiet until Baptist Noel commenced speaking. In his speech he was several times interrupted by the priests, or their partizans, who kept continually vociferating "Mr. Chairman, Mr. Chairman, hear me." The chairman succeeded in quieting them several times, until Mr. Noel began to read some extracts from a Roman Catholic manual, which exasperated the priests and Roman Catholics very much, and the hubbub and uproar became so general that the police were called in, and the meeting was about to be dissolved. Just at this particular moment we caught a glimpse of Mr. Wilson, whom we knew was engaged to speak at the meeting, standing on the front of the platform, and bawling out at the top of his voice, "I'm an Irishman, hear me," and using great gesticulations.

The priests and their friends believed that he was one of their party, who had, during the hubbub, got on the platform, and they shouted lustily to give the Irishman a hearing, and in a very short time the agitated assembly had resumed their seats and were quiet. We must here state that this was Mr. Wilson's first *debut* on a platform since he came to reside in London. Before he commenced his speech, he paused for a considerable time, in order that the surging billows of agitated passions in the bosoms of his hearers might subside. He then broke silence by exclaiming, in a serio-comic vein, "You English ridicule us Irish about our shillelaghs and Donnybrook Fairs, but I confess, from what I have seen here to-night, John Bull could crack my crown with as sturdy a blow as Paddy from Cork." The good-natured manner in which this and other remarks of a similarly ludicrous nature were made, perfectly threw the vast meeting into convulsions of laughter. After it had subsided, cries of "Hats off!" "Sit down in front!" "Let's see the Irishman!" rung through the whole house. A priest who sat next us, and who had given us a great deal of annoyance all evening, by his continually interrupting the meeting, thus accosted us—"Do you know who that is?" Anxious to get his opinion of Mr. Wilson, we expressed ignorance. "Is he a priest?" said he, again. We replied, "Do not know." "Well," said he, "be he what he may, he is a clever man,

and we are sure to have a good speech from him." "No doubt of that," said we; so he off with his hat, and out with his pencil, to take notes. For about the first fifteen minutes Mr. Wilson rebutted some statements of several of the previous speakers in reference to Ireland, for he was a true patriot, and ever ready to vindicate his "beloved land." During these remarks, the priest by our side kept bawling "Bravo!" "Well done, Irishman!" "Give it to them!" "Erin for ever!" By-and-by Mr. Wilson, in a very adroit manner, slipped into his Protestant shoes, and delivered one of the most powerful and eloquent speeches we ever heard—tearing to atoms the whole absurdities and dogmas of Popery; and, by his clever tact and numerous anecdotes, managed to rivet the attention of his hearers during his speech without receiving any opposition, and ended by challenging any priest or priests present to a public discussion on the merits of Popery—giving them his address, and promising to give them as much *cudgelling* as they chose. It was quite laughable to see the subdued tone of our neighbour, the priest. After Mr. Wilson finished, the priest put on his hat, pocketed his note-book, and quietly left the meeting, with a stomachful of Protestant cookery, capital food for a long fast. After the meeting terminated, all the ministers on the platform came and shook hands with Mr. Wilson, and expressed their delight at his excellent speech; and, after he came

home, several of them called upon him to request his presence on the next evening, at a meeting for a similar purpose, near Ballspond.

In the management of the speech above referred to, his keen knowledge of human nature stood his friend. He was an adept at combining child-like simplicity with sterling wisdom ; and the priests saw that he could either assume the plumage of the dove, or strike with the stunning paw of the lion.

During the first year of his ministry in London, there were few of his flock who did not receive a token of his esteem, in being invited to his home to partake of his hospitality, and this was done by himself and his kind partner in such an off-hand style of generous hospitality, that there was no mistaking the ingenuousness of the disposition which prompted it. On these occasions, just before supper, he invariably read a chapter in the Bible, made some excellent concise remarks thereon, then sung a psalm or hymn, and afterwards prayed. The writer can affirm, from personal knowledge, that the company greatly relished and appreciated it, for, as we before observed, when speaking of his pastoral visits, he introduced it with that ease and grace which rendered it acceptable to all, and showed that God was to be worshipped and acknowledged in the social circle as well as in the closet and church. Nor was the spirit of sociableness confined to his own flock, for, immediately after he came to Lon-

don, he got his brethren of the London Presbytery to meet on the first Tuesday of every month and breakfast together. Dr. Hamilton speaking of this says—

"His heart yearned towards his ministerial brethren, and, with the hope of promoting brotherly love and better acquaintance, he founded a breakfast meeting on the first Tuesday of every month. It was a season of hallowed fellowship. When the brief repast was ended, part of the time was spent in worship, and the remainder in discussing matters vital to our ministry."

Soon after he came to England, he was very much struck with the superfluous and extravagant style of living practised here, and he said, "I will have to put a knife to my throat in this land of epicures." This resolution was very necessary, and he found it in after years to be a wholesome precaution. It is said of Diogenes, that, meeting a young man going to a feast, he took him up in the street and carried him home to his friends, as one who was running into imminent ruin, had he not prevented him. Addison says—"For my part, when I behold a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy that I see gouts and dropsies, fevers, lethargies, and poverty, with other innumerable distempers, lying in ambuscade among the dishes."

"Νηπιοι, εδ ιςασιυ, ō σω πλέον ἥμισυ παντος
Ους όσου ευ μαλαχη τε δε ασφοδελω μεγ ονειας."*

* "Fools! not to know that half exceeds the whole—
How blest the sparing meal and temperate bowl."

"A fat kitchen," says Benjamin Franklin, "makes a lean will."

The following anecdote will illustrate his unsectarian spirit. About a year after he came to England he was attending the Synod in Birmingham, and it so happened that at his time there was a large anti-Maynooth meeting in the town-hall; Mr. Wilson says of this meeting, "that he never saw such a monster assembly."* Here he delivered one of the most thrilling, powerful, and eloquent speeches that ever was heard in the hall, to an audience of about 5,000. He was followed by one of his brethren in the ministry, who took occasion in his speech to find fault with every sect but his own, which he lauded to the skies. This narrow-mindedness very much hurt Mr. Wilson's feelings; and, on the next morning, at a public breakfast, which the ministers belonging to the Presbyterian Church had, and which was attended by a great number of laymen, Mr. Wilson, in his speech at the breakfast, gave this individual a regular good dressing for the sectarian spirit which he had shown on the previous evening. This minister had spoken at the breakfast before Mr. Wilson, and had warmly advocated brotherly love and charity; but Mr. Wilson had a rod in pickle for him, and use it he must, though, perhaps, in a mitigated form to what he intended. He said—

"Mr. Chairman,—I am truly delighted to observe the

delightful change which has, during the last twenty-four hours, come over the feelings of my brother who has just addressed you. Last night he appeared to be living in a narrow little citadel of his own formation, having a barking cur stationed at every entrance, who would admit no one to come near his master, or have any correspondence with him, unless he wore a similar hat, coat, and inexpressibles to his master; but, lo, Mr. Chairman, this morning the dogs are gone, and angels of mercy and love giving invitations to all to embrace their master have taken their place; his soul is enlarged and expanded—he feels as if he could embrace all mankind, from the Turk to the Quaker. Now, what has been the cause of this delightful and mighty change. Hold! I have it. On yesterday, Sir, I visited your glassworks in this great manufacturing town, and I there saw a workman introduce a glass rod into a boiling mass of liquid glass, and when he withdrew the rod, a small portion of this hot mass was attached to its end. The workman then put the opposite end of the tube in his mouth, and blew a little of his breath into it, and I presently saw the hot mass at the other end beginning to grow large; he continued to blow, and as he blew I still observed the mass get larger, until a cavity was formed in its centre, and, to my astonishment, it assumed the shape of a bottle, capable of containing any liquid. (Roars of laughter and applause.) Mr. Chairman, thus it is—prejudice will create a sectarian spirit in the bosom of any mortal, which will burn so intensely, that, in a short time, the heart will become so hot and contracted, that it will sear up all the finer feelings of our nature, and leave scarcely room for a catholic wish or thought; but only let the breath of the Holy Spirit be infused into it, and distil upon it like the dews of Hermon, then its hot and contracted nature will soon give place— it will expand and become not a nut-shell, but a temple in which the Lord will delight to dwell, and which will pant with loving emotions after the welfare of all mankind."

In the year 1845, a series of Presbyterian re-

unions was held in London. The one to which we are about to refer was held on Friday evening, the 11th April, in the hall of the London Tavern. It originated with the lay union, and was designed to give an impulse to various schemes of Presbyterian enterprise. On this occasion there was a *soirée;* and we remember being much struck, on entering the spacious hall, with the immense loads of cake, &c., under which the tables were groaning. "Nothing," said Mr. Wilson, "is like a cup of tea for bringing people together. The eloquence of the greatest orator is not *half* so attractive as the sociable charms residing in the china herb." And, truly, if we are to judge of its truth by the immense number which attended on this occasion, to partake of

"The cup which cheers, but not inebriates,"

we must conclude that he is right. The Right Honourable Fox Maule, M.P., had engaged to preside, but was detained in the House of Commons by the discussion on the Maynooth Bill. However, his place was supplied by Alexander Gillespie, jun., Esq. After ample justice being done to the tea and cake, the speeches then commenced, and the following is that of Mr. Wilson, copied from the "Presbyterian Messenger," Nov. 1, 1845:—

The Rev. Josias Wilson moved the second resolution—

"That the destitution of a faithful Gospel ministry, and of an

efficient pastoral superintendence, which exists so extensively throughout this great metropolis, is a loud call for increasing efforts in the cause of church and school extension; and that, while our Presbyterian constitution affords peculiar facilities for the prosecution of such a work, the numerous openings now presenting themselves hold out strong encouragement to engage in it.'

After a few introductory remarks, Mr. Wilson said—

"It may seem a strange statement, yet I do rejoice that Mr. Fox Maule is not here to-night; that he has not gratified himself, and especially gratified us by coming here to-night; but that, from a high sense of duty, he has gone, with a few others of sterling principle, to the House of Commons—where enlightened principle is so rare—to prevent a dark deed from being perpetrated (I refer to the endowment of Maynooth), which can only increase the miseries of my native land. And I do earnestly trust that he, and those with whom he is in concert, may be enabled, as true servants of God, to defend the right, and prevent the sinful appropriation of the public money to the upholding of an institution which has been the seat of rebellion against a Protestant Government, and from which have issued hundreds of clerical agitators who have been the curse of one of the finest countries on the face of the earth. I was greatly delighted with the observation of my dear brother, Mr. Hamilton, as to the union and cordiality of union which characterise the ministers of our Presbytery. Five months ago I came among you as a stranger, but I have forgotten that I was a stranger. The love, the union, the oneness of sentiment and purpose which reigns between me and my brethren, have long since made me feel quite at home. I am aware that we are yet but a *small* body, but the very smallness of our number draws us the more closely to each other's bosoms, and at the same time leads us to cultivate a more intimate reliance on the Great Head of our Church; and when we feel our own

feebleness, we are led to hold closer communion with the Father, and sweeter fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The history of our Church should animate us in the great enterprise on which we have entered in England. In my own country, in Ulster, the early Presbyterian Church was planted by *five* Scotch ministers. They were driven away by persecution from Scotland, and Ulster—the land of hospitality—opened its arms to receive them; and well it might, for they brought along with them the greatest of all treasures, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Two hundred years ago these five noble men, Livingston, and Bryce, and Blair, &c., assembled at Carrickfergus to hold their first meeting of Presbytery, and, as it were, to lay the foundation-stone of the Presbyterian Church. And what is the result? Five hundred ministers are now their successors, and nearly a million of men profess their faith; and though the other parts of Ireland are covered with moral desolation, Ulster is blooming comparatively like an Eden of the Lord. Let us imbibe their spirit, and imitate their sacred example. Whilst these men were spared, sacramental seasons were like great festival occasions in Ulster. The people used to ride on horseback to the meetings ten, twenty, and even thirty miles. Every house in the district was like an inn, and the ministers had to remain for eight days together, preaching the Gospel to hundreds of thirsting souls; and the whole country, especially the lovely vale of Antrim, was embalmed with the sacred spirit of their piety—showers of blessings came down upon them, and their principles spread rapidly over all the province. And what was Scotland in bygone days? Three centuries ago and our reforming fathers were few in number. I say our fathers, for I have Scotch blood flowing in my veins. Scotland was then one of the most degraded and priest-ridden nations in Europe, when God, in His gracious providence, raised up the immortal Knox, and a few others, who were the instruments of emancipating their countrymen from the most galling slavery, and setting a kingdom free. And though Mary, with all her fascinations and

influence, tried to turn these great men aside from their work of reformation, yet, undeterred by threatenings when flattery had failed, they, and the people who flocked in thousands around them, resolved to continue in the liberty with which Christ makes His people free. And eating of the manna which fell on every side, and drinking of the water of life which for ages they had been deprived, the people of Scotland started up to the attitude and stature of rational and independent men, and ever since have continued to be the most enlightened, and the most moral, and the most Sabbath-observing nation that Christendom presents to the world. Ulster, too, as I have said, once degraded by the "Man of Sin," was rescued by the devotion of *five* godly men, who, two hundred years ago, planted in her soil the principles of Christian truth and righteousness; and that province, under the influence of Presbyterianism, presents a striking contrast to the other provinces where Popery reigns triumphant. Ulster, under the influence of our church, is the most industrious, happy, and Sabbath honouring province in Ireland, and stands *at this moment* a great bulwark in this united kingdom of civil and religious liberty. This is what Presbyterianism has done for Scotland and Ireland; and why, I would ask, should it not do more for England too? I rejoice to know that there are hundreds of godly men in the Established Church, and among the various bodies of Dissenters. There is M'Neill, and Stowell, and Noel, and Wilson, the respected vicar of the parish where I labour, and I love them, and all like them, as brethren in Christ. And we desire to cultivate the closest union with churches that are adorned with the names of Hall, and Fuller, and Carey, who are gone to heaven; or Raffles and Jay, and Clayton and James, still fighting the good fight on earth. And to-night I rejoice to see near me my respected brother, Redpath, a worthy successor of the sainted and venerable Waugh, who was the finest specimen of sanctified humanity these eyes ever beheld. To all these brethren we say, 'Go on in the name of our God, and may the pleasure of the Lord

prosper in your hands.' Surely England is wide enough for us all; and at the present time, when infidelity is abroad, and when Puseyism and Popery are encompassing the camp of the saints, all these brethren should, and I trust will, beckon to us to come with them 'to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' My dear friends, you will be rejoiced to hear that the Presbytery of London has resolved that their exertions shall not be limited to this city. They are resolved, in the strength of God, to go out as missionaries to the other great towns and cities of England, where the banner of evangelical Presbyterianism has not been yet unfurled. And at the same time our brethren in the North of England are successfully engaged in the same aggressive movement in the towns and villages around them. Our cause is yet in its infancy, but already it exhibits some of the symptoms of a strong and vigorous manhood; and if we be a united, and prayerful, and holy people, I believe that, under the smile of Heaven, we shall break forth on the right hand and on the left, and the boughs of this vine that our God hath planted will overshadow all this land; in the accomplishment of this noble object, as far as we the ministers are concerned, oh let us remember that this work cannot be achieved by preaching cold, metaphysical sermons. Our people want not your fine, philosophical, dry discussions in the pulpit, but plain, warm-hearted, practical instruction coming home to the conscience and the heart. I am here reminded of an anecdote of the venerable Rowland Hill. A clergyman from the country, who, I suppose the previous six months, had been preparing a gorgeous sermon for the metropolis, delivered it at a missionary anniversary in Surrey Chapel. "Oh," said another clergyman at the close to Mr. Hill, "was it not a beautiful sermon, the periods were so exquisitely *rounded*?" "Rounded," said Mr. Hill; "aye, they were *rounded* as *round* as Satan could wish them. How smoothly they would roll off the sinner's conscience, leaving no impression there!" Let us, in carrying on this work, beware of what is called *fine*

preaching to tickle itching ears, whilst it is not calculated to win the heart to Christ. Let our sermons be like arrows, and barbed arrows, piercing the hearts of the enemies of the King. The hearts of our people must be warmed, and their understandings enlightened by plain, practical discourses; and from what I have seen, during the last five months, I am *confident* that the people of England are ready to *open their* hearts to all *such preachers*, and to say, "Hail, ye blessed of the Lord, the Lord is with you of a truth!" We cannot, however, work alone; you, my brethren, our church-members, must work with us in this mighty enterprise on which we have entered. I rejoice to see so many from all our churches sitting here to-night in Christian harmony, and now I want you all to be as *one* man in Christian co-operation; my earnest desire is, that you should be all *ministers*, all *missionaries*, in your different private spheres, for the dissemination of the Gospel of God. The church of Christ has been compared by the Apostle Paul to the human frame, not only, as I understand, on account of the *sympathies* that pervade the members of the body, but also on account of the activity for which these members were evidently formed. As all the members of the body were formed for active exertion, so it should be among the members of the church of Christ. If only one member of my body were full of life and power, while all the rest were in a state of paralysis, I should be a spectacle of wretchedness in your presence. And if, in any of our churches, there be only one active member, and he be even the *minister of the church*, then I care not how rich, how learned, how respectable that church may be, it is a spectacle of moral—of spiritual wretchedness. 'It has a name to live,' while it is in reality dead. It has been a prominent idea before my mind, for some years, that every member of our churches should have his hands full of some holy occupation; that just, as in one of our great factories, so in all our congregations, every man and woman, old and young, rich and poor, should be engaged in some department of labour, and then the church will stand forth in the eyes of the

world 'clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.' It is only thus she will be enabled to spread the blessing of our religion wide and far around her, and be like a fountain of mercy opened up in this great country. One peculiar character of our Presbyterianism is *union*, and in this we differ from our brethren the Independents. I was much delighted lately in reading the fifth chapter of Luke's Gospel. It is there stated that two vessels were lying together in the lake of Gennesaret; Jesus directed them to launch out and let down their nets for a draught. One of the vessels did so, and enclosed such a multitude of fishes that the net broke. And how did the men in the other ship act? Did they look on with envy, or jealousy, or secret delight, at the breaking of the net, without lending a helping hand? Oh, no; they hastened to the help of their brethren, and the consequence was that they filled both the ships to overflowing. Now, Sir, here is a fine example for our Presbyterian churches, and for all the churches of Christ. Let us act towards each other in the generous spirit of these seafaring men. They belonged to different vessels: the one ship may have been called 'The Joppa,' and the other 'The Damascus.' The crews were not the same; their rigging may have been of different forms; but still they sailed on the same blue waves—were exposed to the same storms—their canvas was filled by the same favouring gale—and when their voyage was ended, and their work done, then, in the same lovely haven, they slept sweetly together, side by side. And here, brethren, we are voyaging on the same sea of life, though we belong to different churches, and, instead of standing at a distance, while *fishing* for the precious souls of men, oh let us stretch out to one another the hand of cordial and mutual co-operation, and present to God, and angels, and men, the delightful spectacle of brethren dwelling together in unity."

Directly after the meeting terminated, we remember being greatly amused and delighted at

seeing Mr. Wilson coming sprawling over the barrier which separated the platform from the body of the hall, and shaking hands with every person whom he knew ; and it struck us very forcibly to see that he was the only minister who came to give a warm greeting to his friends after the meeting was over. The other ministers adjourned to the anti-room, but there was Mr. Wilson in the midst of the people as they were departing, smiling and chatting to the ladies, recognising a friend here and there, and giving him a warm shake of the hand, and receiving many fresh introductions. And, long after the majority of the people had departed, about two dozen persons were seen in the centre of the room, with Mr. Wilson in their midst, engaged in earnest conversation. We merely direct attention to this circumstance, as it shows that his desire was to be continually in the midst of his people, enlivening them by his animating presence, and cheering his own soul by beholding their affection towards him. Neither do we intend to convey any invidious distinction between him and his brethren by our reference to this circumstance. We merely wish to hold forth these little traits in his character, as we are convinced that they tended much to endear him to many people.

All of us are not, perhaps, possessed of a soul like Mr. Wilson's, overflowing with fervent Celtic affections, and glowing with brotherly love. But,

at the same time, we are convinced that these estimable qualities are possessed, in common, to a greater or less extent, and that it depends, in a great measure, *upon ourselves* whether they remain *latent* or not. Only let us view our fellow-creatures as beings destined for either immortal glory or irretrievable woe—either to swell the anthem in the celestial temple, or mingle their direful howlings with the damned ; and then, if there be one spark of brotherly love within our bosoms, it will soon manifest itself by a burning zeal towards the promotion of the eternal salvation of our brethren of all names and races. Mr. Wilson knew and believed this, and, therefore, he embraced every opportunity to cultivate an intimate relationship between him and all men, in order that he might have *abundant* opportunities of making himself generally useful.

The following letter of Dr. Hamilton, of London, alludes to Mr. Wilson's speech at this Birmingham meeting, and also refers to his manner in the Presbytery, and as a speaker in promiscuous assemblies :—

"7, Lansdowne Place, London,
16*th November*, 1849.

"Dear Sir,—You have asked me what manner of man Mr. Wilson was among his ministerial brethren, and in the Presbytery of London ; and it might be enough to answer, the same there as everywhere—in church courts, the same frank, confiding, joyous presence, which won so many welcomes, and left so much endearment in the parlours of his people.

"In the proceedings of a Presbytery there is necessarily much of routine. The receiving of congregational returns—the arrangement of supplies—the reports of committees, and many matters important in their results, but dry in their details. In such proceedings, as well as in questions of form and ecclesiastical law, Mr. Wilson felt little interest.

"The only Synod where I met him was one which assembled at Birmingham, in the year 1845. He spoke against the grant to Maynooth, and the subject of drinking usages, with great effect.

"In all places, and on all occasions, his eloquence was essentially popular, excursive, humorous, and impressive; and if all speeches resembled his, whatever other effects might follow, they would secure a vastly larger attendance of the public at our ecclesiastical consultations. During that visit to Birmingham, he got a fitter outlet to his fervid spirit.

"There was a large anti-Maynooth meeting gathered in the town-hall, and a messenger arrived at the Synod, requesting the loan of a speaker. Mr. Wilson was despatched, and shook the sides of the assembly with an account of his visit to the 'cod-eating college;' and, by the time he had finished the forth-pouring of his ridicule, anecdote, and indignant reasoning, which the excitement of the instant elicited, the cause rode triumphant, and he himself was justly crowned a first-rate orator. As a speaker in promiscuous assemblies, Mr. Wilson owed much of his success to his benignant bearing, and to his always assuming the good-will of his auditory—an element of success which he shared with the greatest of preachers, George Whitefield, and the greatest of pleaders, Thomas Erskine. Some speakers are so sensitive, that it is in the power of a few adverse hearers to quell them completely; they cannot surmount a frowning visage or a contemptuous smile—or half a dozen sleepers, and a pew-door slamming, or a pair of protesting boots departing, would extinguish them entirely. But it was Mr. Wilson's rare felicity of friendly influence only. In a crowd of strangers he fixed on some kindly face, and from

its benevolence fed his own; till, waxing warm with every genial impulse, and glowing with reflected and transmitted fervour, he soon found himself surrounded with propitious listeners, and, thawed into tears, or excited into an ardent temperature, he often left them sharers of his own enthusiasm.

"Yours truly,

"JAMES HAMILTON.

"Dr. Hastings."

The last time in which the writer had the pleasure of his company, the conversation happened to turn upon the rise and fall of nations and empires, and the writer happened to say, that he believed that London and England had arrived at their full splendour and influence, and would soon begin to retrograde, and be finally eclipsed of their glory, like other nations. To which he replied, "I do not believe that; there is a *salt* which will preserve them; for there is a great deal of true and vital religion, both in London and England."

As a specimen of the life of a busy minister, we will here give a few extracts from his pocket-book, taken at random, for the year 1846:—

"Jan. 1.—United prayer-meeting at twelve o'clock, in Regent's Square Church, I to address the meeting.

"Jan. 2.—Meeting of Dissenting Ministers at Claremont Chapel, to prepare for a public meeting on Christian Union.

"Jan. 4,—To preach in the morning on the life of Saul of Tarsus, and in the evening on the judgment.

"Jan. 7.—Ladies' Missionary Meeting at Exeter Hall at twelve o'clock.

"Feb. 1.—Communion Sabbath. Mr. Morgan assisted me. Had a blessed day. 250 Communicants."

The last entry in this book bears date 7th July, about nine months before his death—"To be at Reigate, Rev. Mr. Rees, Church Street. The above will be sufficient to show that his life was one of activity. There was really no fear of him "rusting out."

He believed that a person who led a life of inactivity might be justly compared to a corroding bar of iron, inasmuch as he was liable to become oxidized with the cares of this world, which would eat into his very vitals, and render him unfit for either mental or bodily exertion. Having thus brought to a close this sketch of the life and labours of this *truly* good and *useful* man, the lesson which it emphatically teaches is this, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; forasmuch as we know that our labour *shall not be* in vain in the Lord."

We may be permitted, in conclusion, to address a few words of consolation to his bereaved relations and flock. You have certainly experienced a sad loss, but your loss has been his unspeakable gain—

> "Worlds could not tempt him back again
> To tread life's thorny road."

He is entered upon that rest of which, whilst here, he enjoyed so many foretastes, and upon which he descanted with rapturous delight, filling the bosoms of thousands with a "longing after immortality." Friends, do not mourn as those who

have no hope. The jewel is safe, cleansed of all its earthly dross—polished to a heavenly brightness, and deposited in the regalia of heaven, though its earthly casket rests in Highbury cemetery. Could you be permitted to draw aside for *one moment* the curtain which hides him from your view, and ob[illegible]n only a passing glimpse of the glory which *now* surrounds him—hear him, in company with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the assembly of the "first-born in heaven," swell the anthem in the celestial temple—we believe that you would resemble the Apostle of the Gentiles, when he had a glimpse of these beatific visions of glory, "wish to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

The realization of this may be much nearer than we suppose. Then "let us work whilst it is called to day," "let us gird up our loins," "put on our armour," and have our "lights trimmed and brightly burning," so that, when the voice of the Bridegroom comes—whether at cock-crowing or midnight—whether our exit hence is to be caused by the breath of pestilence, or the lingering torments of a painful disease—we may be ready, one and all, "to go in and sit down at the marriage-supper of the Lamb, in company with him who is gone before us." Amen.

APPENDIX.

The following letters are those alluded to in the former part of the volume, from the Rev. Drs. Dick, Ferrier, and Rev. Mr. Gavin, in reply to Mr. Wilson's inquiries, "Whether they held that ministers ought to have any secular employments?" and requesting their opinions thereon.

These ministers having attained to eminence in the Church of Christ, their opinions may, therefore, be valuable on this subject:—

"GLASGOW, *August* 24, 1831

"MY DEAR SIR,—It is not in my power to give you, as you desire, my sentiments at large on the subject of your letter. The Divinity Hall is sitting at present, and the duty which I have to perform takes up much of my time in public and in private. I have thought it proper to acknowledge your letter without delay, but hope that you will excuse me for confining my answer to a few sentences.

"I do not think that we are at liberty to form any opinion but one on the question, after the exhortation of Paul to Timothy, 'Give thyself wholly to single things;' and his obvious design in the following words, 'No man that warreth, entangleth himself with the things of this life,' &c. I do not see how a minister can engage in secular business, as, according to your account, many of your brethren do, without neglecting the duties of his office. Besides leaving too little time for them, he is apt to acquire habits of thinking and feeling ill-fitted for the calm and serious study of religious truth; and, by mingling too familiarly with the people in the common transactions of life, he places himself

so much upon a level with them, that they must cease to regard him with that degree of respect which is necessary to ensure due attention in his counsels and admonitions.

"There are cases, however, in which the practice, however condemnable on general grounds, is unavoidable. If the church cannot, or will not maintain a minister, he must, after the example of Paul, work with his own hands. In our censures, a distinction should be made between those who voluntarily involve themselves in business, and those who do so from necessity. I have been given to understand that the people in your country are very blameable in providing so sparingly for the wants of their ministers. If the people have compelled them to become farmers, merchants, and schoolmasters, let them be told their duty in terms of sharp rebuke. The victims of their illiberality are objects of pity. Great exertion will be necessary in attacking a practice so widely extended, and which, in many instances, may seem justified by circumstances, which the accused cannot control. Your knowledge of the state of your church will enable you to judge how far you may proceed in your reproofs, consistently with truth and charity.

"I am, dear Sir, yours truly,

"J. DICK.

"Permit me to add my best wishes for you and your family, and my prayer that your ministerial labours may be attended with success."

"PAISLEY, *Sept.* 15, 1831.

"DEAR SIR,—Your esteemed favour of August did not reach me till the 23d or 24th of the same month. I was then, as I now am, in a more indifferent state of health than when I saw you. I have reason, however, to believe that I am convalescent.

"Your communication was most interesting to me. That so many ministers connected with the Presbyterian churches of Ireland should have in so great a degree secularized themselves, is truly deplorable. I cannot but applaud the design you have formed, and wish you all success. The state of things which you describe as existing in your churches is certainly most unscriptural, and is necessarily injurious to

the character of the ministers, to their improvement, to their official authority and success, to the edification of the people, and to the general state of religion among you. Most gladly would I contribute anything in my power to forward your object. Most gladly would I endeavour to show that your strong hold in argument is the Scriptural view of the nature of the pastoral office—the positive authoritative requisition that those who hold it must devote themselves entirely to it—the consideration that the duties of the office are so many, so various, so onerous, and require such a degree of attention and exertion, as must necessarily absorb the whole time and energies of the man who shall give himself conscientiously to the performance of them, &c., &c. When I considered that such is the ground which you ought to occupy, and will occupy, it appeared to me that anything which could be suggested by me, or even by others more skilful, would only be a repetition of what had already occurred to your own mind. Besides, I much doubt if the avowed interference, in any form, of any minister on this side of the water (endowed or unendowed) would not be considered as rather obtrusive, and might not be offensive. Whatever arguments or excuses may be urged from necessity or expediency, it may be, and I doubt not will be, irresistibly proved by you—that the Scripture leaves it not in the option of any minister to secularize himself, nor in the option of any Christian congregation to reduce him to the necessity of doing so. This I think is a very important view of the subject, and one which may be made to strike every conscientious man among the clergy and laity. Much would be gained if you could secure a respectable number of ministers to avow their agreement with you, and to systematize a co-operation for reform. Means should be used to enlighten and elevate the minds of candidates for the ministry. If they were better prepared by a love of literature and of theological acquirements, they would disdain to submit to such degradation. And if the preachers were improved, there might be an emulation among the people to possess the most accomplished of them, and, of course, to provide better for them. Any address, however powerful, I would consider as nearly thrown away, unless it be followed by measures of amelioration.

"Does not the Royal Bounty operate injuriously on the

exertions of the people. Unquestionably, establishments paralyze their pecuniary efforts here. In your circumstances, although you should be able to do something successful, the improvement must be gradual.

"Please to present my kind and respectful remembrances to my dear friend, Mrs. Wilson, and to receive my best wishes for yourself and the family.

"I remain, dear Sir, yours most faithfully,

"W. FERRIER."

"GLASGOW, *August* 24, 1831.

"REV. DEAR SIR,—I had yesterday the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 5th instant, and I lose no time in complying with your request, being convinced that what you complain of is a great evil, and extremely hurtful to the cause of true religion. The first text that occurs to me is 2 Timothy ii. 4—'No man that warreth,' &c., which I would dispose in some such method as this :—

"I. The Christian ministry a warfare against the devil, the world, and the flesh.

"II. The great object of a good soldier is to please Him that called him to the service, by following His example, in zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners.

"III. He must have no engagements inconsistent with entire loyalty and devotedness to the service of his Master.

"1. If he has any interest in the enemy's country, he must abandon it, lest it give his mind a bias in the enemy's favour. Illustrate this in application to the world as the enemy. It is not meant that one who has worldly property should relinquish it, but he ought to be content with the interest, or rent of it, without employing it in trade.

"2. Must have no clandestine communication with the enemy's camp. This would entangle him in a treasonable correspondence. Let his opposition to the world, and devotedness to the work of God, be explicitly avowed and constantly maintained. No compromise with any of the maxims or practices of the world.

"3. Must never appear voluntarily within the enemy's lines. This would be held as desertion, and punished accordingly. Illustrate and apply this in relation to ministers mixing themselves up with the world in its labours,

cares, and pursuits—buying and selling—watching the rise and fall of markets, and the state of the weather—tempted, from self-interest, to wish for high prices, though the poor should suffer, &c., &c., &c.

"I am afraid you will trace in the above some of the quaintness of the old school, but you will easily be able to alter it agreeably to your own taste, and add many other things, suggested by your own reflection, and your knowledge of existing abuses.

"I suspect the congregations are more to be blamed in this matter than their ministers. Surely, if the former gave the latter adequate support, as the law of Christ requires, they would have no temptation so to abstract themselves from their proper calling. If such be the case to any great extent, you will address your brethren more in the language of sympathy than censure, and you will strongly exhort the people to do their duty for their own sakes and the sake of their children, for such a state of things is inconsistent with the continuance of an effective evangelical ministry. The candlestick will be removed, and your children will be left to the darkness and degradation of Popery.

"I shall communicate your request to Mr. Ewing and Dr. Wardlaw the first opportunity. The latter has been in poor health, which has unfitted him from close study ; but whatever either shall furnish, shall be sent you through Mr. Stevenson.

"Mrs. M'Gavin unites in kind remembrance to Mrs. Wilson, with

"Yours very truly,

"W. M'GAVIN."

THE following are extracts of an Address which he delivered to a minister at his ordination, in London, in the year 1846 :—

"MY BELOVED BROTHER,—You have just been set apart to the most solemn work in which a responsible being can engage. The vow of a parent at the baptism of his child, and the vow of a communicant at the table of the Lord, are attended by solemn consequences ; but your ordination vow is vastly more momentous than the one or the other. I

the parent be unfaithful to his sacramental engagement, he may, and often does, ruin the souls of his children—if the communicant violate his eucharistic vow, he hardens his own heart, and crucifies the Son of God afresh ; but if you, my brother, be unfaithful, you not only bring judgment on your own soul, and moral ruin on one family of your charge, but, as far as your inconsistency and unfaithfulness are known and felt, their tendency is to generate infidelity, irreligion, moral and spiritual death. My earnest desire is to address you, and that you may receive my address under the influence of the words of the Prophet Ezekiel (iii. 7, 8, 9.) I have only one object in view—the glory of God, your comfort and success as a brother in the ministry, and the salvation of precious souls.

"I trust, my brother, you have not entered into the ministry for filthy lucre's sake—that you have not sought the priest's office for a morsel of bread. I believe you have not. It is right you should live by the altar if you *faithfully* and *devotedly* serve at the altar ; but he who ministers in holy things merely to obtain a livelihood, is a *successor only to Judas* in the apostleship ; 'good were it for that man if he had never been born.' Neither do I believe you have entered into this high and holy office to obtain an ephemeral popularity. I do not say it is unscriptural to wish for public favour and acceptance for your ministrations, so that you may gain for the Word a ready and unobstructed access to the hearts of the people. An unpopular minister is not likely to be an instrument of extensive usefulness in the church. But let me remind you that the applause of the public is as unsubstantial as the floating cloud in the heavens—a gorgeous spectacle for a moment, but it speedily dissolves and mocks the gazer's eye. Forget not that your Master heard the multitude exclaiming, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' and in a few days the same people shouted like infernal fiends—'Not this man but Barabbas. Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him. His blood be upon us and on our children.' The applause of the crowd might, by any passing trivial circumstance, be turned into the most malignant reproach and unrelenting persecution.

"Suffer the word of exhortation. It was administered 1800 years ago by a master in Israel to a beloved son

(1 Timothy iv. 16), 'Take heed to thyself and thy doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.' The first and great object for a Christian minister to have decided is, that his own soul is savingly converted by the Holy Ghost. Have you felt the value of your own soul? Do you enjoy a sweet sense of pardoning mercy? Is the Spirit abiding in you, enlightening your mind, and sanctifying your affections? These are questions of paramount importance. And no talent, or learning, or natural amiability will atone for the want of these essential elements in a minister's character. Without the Holy Ghost a minister is a heartless, hypocritical drudge in the work of Christ: but the influence of the Spirit on the soul, like oil on machinery, causes you to move sweetly, and steadily, and swiftly in the path of duty. An unconverted minister is really an ecclesiastical monster—'a wolf in sheep's clothing.' He attempts to serve two masters whose interests are diametrically opposed. He might serve five or ten masters if their interests were identical; but pretending to serve God he is only serving Mammon—professing to honour Christ his heart is leagued with Belial—his head is working one way while his heart is moving another; and all that he does in the ministry, he does behind a hideous mask, in every sermon he preaches, and in every prayer he utters at the altar of God. He breeds an unholy familiarity in his mind with the forms of godliness, which hardens his heart like a nether millstone, and creates an awful hopelessness as to his own salvation.

"The question has sometimes been asked—Should an unconverted man be tolerated in the ministry? Is it likely he may do good in this sacred office? As well may it be asked, Should we admit a hungry wolf among the sheep because he has covered himself with sheep's clothing? What did Achan do for the hosts of Israel? True, he did his work. He treacherously deceived them all, and was the means of their discomfiture in the presence of their enemies. But what cared he for the honour of the militant host, if he only secured what his heart lusted after, the wedge of gold, and the goodly Babylonish garment? What did Judas achieve in the apostleship? Just what may ever be expected from his successors. He carried the bag—betrayed the Son of Man

with a kiss—valued the God and Saviour of the world at thirty pieces of silver—sold Him into the hands of His enemies —and then, under the agony of a tortured conscience, went away and hanged himself: and while the shattered body of the suicide was smoking in its own blood, his soul, his lost, his guilty soul, had gone to its own place. Oh, that all unconverted ministers were warned by the awful fate of Judas and of Achan! The voice of God to the unconverted minister is, 'What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth?'

"You must have observed a very interesting circumstance related in the law of Moses, that before Aaron and his sons were consecrated to the priest's office, they were ceremonially washed with pure water, and robed with the ephod, the breastplate, and the mitre, or the holy crown; a bullock and ram were killed in the sacrifice; they placed their hands on the head of the victim, and the blood of the ram was sprinkled on the tip of Aaron's ear, on the thumb of his right hand, on the great toe of his right foot, and the anointing oil was poured on his head till it ran down to the skirts of his garments. Does not this teach ministers a striking lesson in a beautiful and attractive style. We use none of these observances to-day, because we hold them to have been of a ceremonial character, and that they were all fulfilled in our great High Priest. We sprinkle you with no blood; but we urge you to seek for the *full assurance* that head, and hands, and feet, your whole body, soul, and spirit, are sprinkled in the blood of the Lamb. We gird you with no curious girdle, but we urge you to have the girdle of truth and sincerity around every faculty of your mind. We put no sacerdotal breastplate on your bosom, but on the tablet of your heart let the names of your people be deeply engraven, that you may remember them daily before the Lord. We put no mitre or crown upon your head, or oil upon your raiment—if we did so we would blaspheme the Son of God, depart from the simplicity of New Testament institutions, and only be mimicking the artifices of the 'Man of Sin;' but we plead for the descent of the Holy One, that, as a tongue of fire He may rest upon you, and as an unction from on high, may cheer, and refresh, and strengthen you in all your public and private ministrations.

"My brother, study the Word of God daily. Study it, not merely for its chronology, history, philosophy, biography, poetry, and parable—not merely that you may fill your quiver with arrows to discomfit the enemies of truth—not even that as a minister you may be able by sound doctrine to build up your people in our most holy faith; but study it especially as a Christian man, that your own soul may grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. The Bible is a mine in which you cannot dig too deeply. There is no danger to be apprehended from the depth of your descent into it. Contrary to the course of nature, as you go down into this mine, the atmosphere becomes more pure and balmy; the light increases as you descend, and with the instrumentality of faith and prayer, you bring up out of it riches, yea, unsearchable riches and righteousness. Oh, read it, till with the prophet you can say, Thy 'Word was found and I did eat it, and thy Word was the joy and rejoicing of my heart.'

"Be eminently a man of prayer. It is essential not only to your own soul's health, but to your success as a minister. The spirit and exercise of prayer are like a barometer, by which you may judge of the state of experimental godliness in yourself and your people. Believe me, the most prayerful man in our church is the servant whom our Master will most abundantly bless. God will peculiarly own him who comes most constantly to consult and plead with Him in prayerful confidence. Bathe your soul in the secrecy of prayer, and your face will shine when you appear on the mount of ordinances among the people. Talk to God often in private prayer, and your lips will burn with a lambent flame, and you will utter words of fire, and words of consolation too, when you come forth to the sanctuary as an ambassador of Christ. And whether you pray in the family, the closet, or the social circle, oh, let me urge you especially, never to forget your beloved flock. The great Apostle of the Gentiles never bent his knee without pleading for the various churches he had planted. I once knew a minister, and spent some weeks under his roof—he was a careless, worldly man, and hardly ever prayed for his people in family devotion, and he never had a day's comfort or prosperity among them. You may compose like a Cicero, and deliver like a

Demosthenes, and, if prayerless, the hearts of the hearers will be unsoftened and unchanged ; but if you study, and write, and preach, in the spirit and exercise of affectionate prayer for your flock, your message will be the power of God and the wisdom of God to many a soul. If you be thus a man singular for prayer, devotedness to God, and separation from the world, you will be a blessing to multitudes while you live, and when you die, you may have no monumental marble to cover you, but many a child of God, saved through your instrumentality, will be seen weeping over your green grave, and children's children will talk of you as the 'man of God' that lived and ministered here.

"I have thus far addressed you, especially as to the state of your soul as a Christian man. Let me now speak to you, briefly, with the same freedom and affection, in reference to your public character as a Christian minister. Your pulpit ministrations I place first in order, because I hold, with the Christian poet, that

——"The pulpit
Must stand acknowledged while the world shall stand,
The most important and effectual guard,
Support and ornament of virtue's cause."

Make your preparation for the pulpit a leading and engrossing object during the whole week. The late eminent Dr. Dick, of Glasgow, always had his subjects fixed before he retired to rest on Sabbath night for the next Lord's-day ; and hence, wherever he went, in whatever he was engaged, he was revolving the subjects of his discourses during the entire week. One of the most eminent ministers at present in the British churches, and one singularly blessed among his people, makes all his preparation for the Sabbath on the Monday and Tuesday of each week. And how can a minister consistently preach on the sin of procrastination in the pulpit, while he himself has put off all needful study till the dread approach of the holy Sabbath drives him to scramble for a few hurried thoughts, with which he appears in the sanctuary, not clothed in the calm and sacred dignity of an ambassador of Christ, but in mental and bodily trepidation, arising from an unfurnished mind, and the consequent accusations of a guilty conscience ?

"I recommend to you also, my brother, to preach in a consecutive series, as much as possible. Your subjects thus naturally arise before you as welcome weekly visiters, whom you have expected ; and your people derive an incalculable benefit by studying and reading, as well as yourself, in connexion with the anticipated exercises of the Sabbath. There is thus a mutual preparation made, and a corresponding benefit derived both by minister and people. It is proverbial that 'a rolling stone gathers no moss ;' and I am much inclined to think that when a minister is rambling from one subject to another, without any connexion—preaching on the Trinity to-day and the Resurrection to-morrow, on the Millenium to-day and on Adoption to-morrow, on the Book of Judges to-day and the Gospel by John to-morrow—there will be in that congregation scanty theological knowledge, and little deep-seated piety. Our forefathers in Scotland and in Ulster were giants in their day in religious knowledge and in consistent godliness, and the Sabbath services of their ministers, above all others, were characterised by a consecutive series of discourses in doctrinal and practical theology.

"Let all your sermons be enriched by sacred learning—not by school-boy learning, or the learning of a pedagogue. It is sickening to any man of taste to see a creature puffed up with a smattering of learning, quoting flippantly in the very sanctuary, and in the presence of dying men, from Homer and Cicero, instead of David, and Isaiah, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Oh, let your discourses be enriched by the learning and wisdom that come from above—by an intimate and experimental knowledge of the life-giving Word of God. I object not though you preach flowery discourses—not, indeed, the flowers and tropes of a vain and vapid oratory—but let your flowers be culled from the field of Revelation; let every sermon you preach be as fragrant as possible with the 'Rose of Sharon,' and beautified and adorned with the 'Lily of the Valley,' and graced and enlivened with 'the Plant of Renown.' Let the loaded apple-tree of the song be the beginning, and middle, and end of all your discourses.

"And while you preach, remember it may be to some the last time they may hear of the Lord Jesus. Preach, therefore, as a dying man to dying men—with the judgment, and

heaven, and hell full in view—and recollecting that 'God is one of your hearers.' Preach as if the salvation of every soul before you depended on your present effort. Preach as if you were casting out a rope to a sinking seaman. Preach with your whole body, and soul, and spirit. Throw yourself into the work as if you felt it to be your last sermon. Preach as Paul did, the tears gushing from his eyes. while love to Christ and souls was burning in his heart. I have heard a lawyer pleading in a court of justice, where £100 was the object of his solicitude; and had you seen him speaking with such impassioned ardour, while the jury were swept away by his resistless eloquence, you would have joined them at once in pronouncing a verdict in his favour. That lawyer stands now at the very head of his profession. And shall a lawyer be thus vehement and earnest for a few paltry pounds, and shall we stand like statues in the pulpit, when speaking of the love of God to perishing man—and discoursing of the terrors of hell and the happiness of heaven. I have been compelled occasionally to sit under such ministers, and they preached so carelessly, or read so slavishly or so monotonously, that the people were generally nodding assent to all they said, while every sentence was like an icicle dropping from their lips. The pulpit was very, very cold—and the people were callous and unconverted. Was it thus Luther preached and Knox thundered when they roused a slumbering world? Was it thus Whitefield or Wesley proclaimed the Gospel when they kindled a flame of light and love over all England and America? Oh, no! their souls were filled with love to Jesus, and their words were like coals of fire thrown among the multitudes that flocked around them. Our own immortal Reformer, in his last days, often required to be helped into the pulpit; and yet, when he fairly entered into his subject, he seemed to gain a giant's strength, and to preach with a giant's power; but having spent all his strength in the sanctuary, he was again carried to his own house, enjoying the sweet luxury of complete exhaustion in the service of his Master. Filled with a holy ambition to imitate these noble men—constrained by the love of Christ to seek the salvation of every soul committed to you —give thyself wholly, prayerfully, and affectionately to this great and honourable work, and the Holy Ghost will abun-

dantly descend on you and your people, and make your Church like a garden that God himself hath watered.

I have spoken to you, my beloved brother, with all freedom, but with all affection, on two points of vital importance: first, your *private character as a Christian man;* and, secondly, your *public character as a Christian minister.* Let me farther address you in reference to your *character and duties as pastor of the flock.* I do not consider this subject of inferior moment to anything that I have yet submitted to your consideration. Your private walk as a Christian pastor will have the most powerful reflective influence on your pulpit ministrations. It either deepens and seals the impressions made on your audience by your discourses, or it exposes you as an inconsistent and hypocritical formalist, playing your part as best you can, in the public assembly of God's people. If all the seriousness and solemnity of a minister be left behind him in the pulpit, and if worldliness or levity characterise him in private life, his people must soon lose all respect for his person and his work. If Jesus and His cause, the claims of the soul and eternity, be descanted on in powerful and glowing language in the church, and hardly ever referred to in private conversation, then be assured he is pulling down, through the week, what he built up on the Sabbath—nay, he is steeling the minds of his people altogether against Gospel ministrations, and forcing them to believe that he is a mere pulpit-machine in the sanctuary—has made the ministry a stepping-stone to a little pelf, or a little fame—and placing his soul in awful jeopardy, rendering his salvation almost impossible even to a God of grace, he substitutes the most solemn office under heaven to the gratification of a carnal and unrenewed nature. Remember, that the thoughtless and unguarded act—one foolish and ungracious expression—one unclerical and unchristlike movement—may do an injury to the Messiah's cause, that, by ten years' pulpit ministration, you may not be able to repair. Many a powerful preacher has been wholly useless to the church in consequence of his inconsistencies in private life. The dead fly destroys the flavour of the most precious ointment. While, on the other hand, I have known a minister of moderate mental attainments, and feeble powers as a pul-

pit orator, and yet, by the holiness of his life, and the godly consistency of his whole demeanour, he had unbounded influence among his flock, was loved and reverenced by all who knew him, and left a divine unction, a savour of Jesus' name behind him in every circle where he moved. In the pulpit, and in private, there was no contradiction. His private deportment was the development and confirmation of his public discourses. Not merely with his *lips* but with his *life* he preached the Gospel. He was an ambassador of Christ in all places, and under all circumstances. In the church he preached with artless simplicity, but he prayed with irresistible fervour. He was not only a minister in the pulpit, but equally so in the sociable circle—at the marriage-feast—in the house of mourning—and in the chamber of death. The gay and volatile revered him ; the young loved him as a brother and a friend. He lived and breathed in an atmosphere of religion. He was an 'epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.' His work was always pleasant, always prosperous ; for the Holy Spirit rested upon him in all his labours. Oh, let me implore you, for the sake of Christ's honour, the establishment and extension of our church, the salvation of immortal souls, by every solemn and momentous consideration, to keep thyself pure in private life, and in every place let it be seen that you are an ambassador of Christ. I do not exhort you to singularity or moroseness in the social circle. Pleasantness and peace, love and joy, are fruits of the Spirit of God, and a monkish austerity is a feature not of Christ, but of Antichrist. But in the society of your people there is a dignity and a sacred decorum that should never forsake you. And I would counsel you to frequent no company, and resort to no house where you must leave your Master outside, where you cannot sacrifice on the family altar, and introduce the celestial song of praise, and the reading and exposition of the oracles of God. Social intercourse with His people is a source of sweetest enjoyment to a pastor. The meeting of old and young, of relatives and friends, in smiling and happy conviviality, is an oasis in the day's journey in this busy and trying world. There are rosebuds in that green spot scattering their fragrance all around ; but, oh ! remember, every rose has

its thorn, every pleasure its temptation, and see to it that all your social enjoyments be guarded and hallowed by Christ-like piety.

" Beware of engaging in any secular occupation. ' No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please Him who hath called him to be a soldier.' These are the words of the Holy Spirit—' Give thyself wholly to these things, that thy profiting may appear to all.' Now, if we understand this language in its plain simple acceptation, then, we maintain that a Christian minister should be occupied with one work, one great work only—the establishment and extension of the church, and the salvation of souls. To this overwhelming object all he is, and all he has, should be consecrated; and whether by the press, the pulpit, or the platform—the private meditation or the pastoral visit—his time, and talent, and energies should be spent in exhibiting Christ for the redemption of a fallen world. The minister who, instead of wholly devoting his life to the spread of the Gospel, is also engrossed with some secular calling, will experience a sad result in the barrenness of his own mind, and in the spiritual barrenness of his people. We have in our church no internal heresy rending the body of Christ; we are perfectly agreed, in the same mind and in the same judgment, on all points of orthodox theology; but if our clergy be worldly men, bent upon earthly pursuits—serving God upon the Sabbath, and serving their own secularity six days of every blessed week, then there is a disease at work in the ecclesiastical body—a cancer, gradually, but certainly, eating out all vital godliness. The church has a name to live, but is in reality dead. The Reformed Church of France, the Church of confessors and of martyrs, in her purest days, when she was not a rich, but a poor and struggling church, enacted in the National Synod at Paris, in 1559—' That no minister, together with the holy ministry, shall be a practitioner in law or physic, and those who employ themselves in law or physic, or in any other worldly and distracting business, shall be exhorted wholly to forbear, and totally to devote themselves to the duties of their calling. And all provincial Synods shall suspend such as do transgress from the exercise of the holy ministry.' We declaim against Puseyism and Popery, So-

cinianism, and all deadly heresies; but I solemnly believe that a worldly-minded pastor, though fierce for orthodoxy, if engaged in some secular business through the week, destroys all vital piety, all Missionary spirit, all Christian devotedness among his flock, as effectually as any Socinian in the whole kingdom. 'Give thyself wholly to the ministry.' I believe you will do so. And though you may never be rich in this world's goods, you will have the smile of Heaven resting on your conscience—you will be rich in faith and good works—rich in the affections of a growing, united, and spiritually-minded people.

"My brother, make the young the objects of your pastoral care. 'In the morning sow thy seed,' and you shall reap an abundant harvest. It is related of St. Francis Xavier, an accomplished and devoted Jesuit, that, when labouring as a Missionary in India, after travelling a whole day steeped in rain, when he lay down to rest upon the sand in his wet Spanish cloak as his only covering, he used to say to his attendant, if even a little child should come to ask him a question at midnight, 'Be sure to awake me; don't let the child go away.' Oh that we all had equal zeal in an infinitely better cause! Your Master loved little children. The disciples in their ignorance would keep them away, as unworthy of the attention of the incarnate God; but He said, 'Suffer the little children to come to me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' They are the lambs of His flock. 'He gathers the lambs in His arms and carries them in His bosom.' They are the hopes of our church; and if you have the spirit of your Master, you will make them objects of your peculiar regard. Little children are eagle-eyed—they see your mind in your manner—they scrutinize your very motives—they soon discover whether or not you love them—and whatever you say to the children of your flock, whatever act of kindness or affection you show them, will be treasured in their memory when they are grey-headed men and women, and when you are in the deep, deep grave. There is not in the volume of Revelation a character more brilliant than that of David. I admire him as a fearless youth when tending his father's flock and saving them from the lion and the bear. I admire him as a poet, writing those transporting songs that have carried many a soul

in its aspirations to heaven ; and as a musician, striking his harp to strains as sweet as angels sing. I admire him as a warrior, putting to flight the enemies of the Lord. I admire him as a king, with the crown upon his head and the sceptre in his hand ; but I confess I admire him more than all, when he left the cares and the glories of royalty behind him, and gathered his youthful subjects around him, and said, 'Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.' It is a fine sight to see the old oak tree waving in majesty on the brow of the mountain ; but to me it is, if possible, still more interesting to walk through a sweet garden, when the little flowers are blooming in all the tints and hues of heavenly beauty, and every shrub is clothed with the most delicate and lovely verdure. And while you are delighted to see the fathers and mothers of your charge advancing to the full maturity of Christian character, oh ! be sure to walk day by day in the nursery and garden of your church, training up the tender saplings till they become 'trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.' Your sons will thus be like plants grown up in their youth, and your daughters like 'corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace.' That little boy, to whom you now affectionately teach the simple elements of Divine truth, will give you his manly arm to rest upon when you are tottering in old age. That little girl, whose head you stroke in approbation when she has timidly repeated her catechism, and psalms, and hymns, may yet attend you on the bed of sickness with all a Chloe's Christian love.

"Remember, with much tenderness, the children of sorrow. When the harrow of affliction is passing over the soul, that is the best season to sow the seed—the hour to scatter over it the exceeding great and precious promises. An opportunity then lost may never be recalled. It is the duty of the afflicted to 'send for the elders of the church ;' but, if you know of a case of affliction and stand upon your dignity, or loll upon your couch neglecting the sufferer, because through carelessness, or ignorance, or timidity, or poverty, an invitation has not been sent to you, ah ! how could you stand acquitted before Him in judgment, who, unsolicited, and in the midst even of frowns, and contumely,

and persecution, went about continually doing good? To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, nay, to visit any abode of sorrow—to soothe and save any agonized soul—is the very essence of pure and undefiled religion. And never, never forget it, that the heart you gain for Christ in affliction, the bosom you then fill with the consolations of the Gospel, may be a pillow for your own head in the hour of sickness and death. Even a cup of cold water, the very least mark of attention and love shown to a disciple, especially an afflicted disciple, shall in nowise lose its reward.

"I recommend to you, with the greatest earnestness, *the regular pastoral visitation of your flock from house to house.* For this part of your ministration we can plead high apostolic example. The Apostle Paul preached the Gospel publicly, and from house to house. (Acts xx. 20.) And if, in the midst of his multiplied labours—flying, like the angel in apocalyptic vision, from country to country, and from continent to continent—from Europe to Asia, and from Asia to Europe again—if he had time for domiciliary visitation, if he felt it to be a duty and a privilege to do so, as an ambassador of Christ, oh! should not we, with all fidelity and affection, walk in his sacred footsteps. Suffer me to say, after upwards of twenty years' experience in the ministry, that you never can be a successful minister in this church, nor in any church, without constant, cordial, faithful visitation of your flock. Some object to this work, because it takes them from their study, and deprives them of the opportunity of cultivating their own minds. I know the minister should be a student all his life, and I reprobate the idea of preaching, without prayerful and thorough preparation. But, ah! there have been hours and days spent in perfecting a trope, and polishing a sentence, and elaborating from a text a system of abstract, dry, heartless metaphysics, that would have been infinitely better spent in talking to the aged believer about the things of God, and encouraging the young to begin the Christian race. In visiting a few families in one day, I have acquired more valuable knowledge—have got more insight into human nature—learned more about the spiritual workings of the human breast—found out the wants, and cares, and temptations of God's people—have had

my own heart refreshed, and my mind more enlightened and enlarged, by the confidential outpouring of all that was in their bosoms—have got better lessons in the science of appropriate and practical preaching, than I could gain in twelve months by volumes of the trash that is flung upon the world by ministers who will not work, like Paul, from house to house, but who waste their precious time in *authorship*, as dead, and dull, and worthless, as their own dull and heavy, and insipid pulpit ministrations. The greatest of living pulpit orators, and one of the most popular of religious writers* found time, in the midst of his studies, for the regular visitation even of the poorest family in his parish. And if you wish to be looked on as the friend and brother of your people—if you wish to have their hearts' affections engaged in behalf of yourself and your ministry, you will be no stranger in their houses and at their firesides. How does the physician become acquainted with the diseases of his patients? By standing at a distance from them, and giving them some general advice? By no means. He enters into their houses—he goes into the sick-chamber day after day—talks to them privately and personally of their whole bodily condition, and thus is enabled to prescribe accurately for the disorder; and, after a few years of hard labour, he stands, as an experienced physician, at the head of his profession. There is a disorder of sin universally spread over every family and member of your congregation; and if ever you intend to be anything but a mere general declaimer, and an expounder of mere general truths, you will dwell among your own flock; become acquainted with their easily besetting sins; their wants, their trials; their attainments in the knowledge and faith of the Gospel; their omissions and commissions; their condition as a regenerate or unregenerate people; their habits with regard to family and closet-prayer: and then, with all this accumulated knowledge, you will compose your discourses, not to exhibit to them your learning or your oratory, but you will hold up a mirror in which they will exactly see the state of their own souls; you will send barbed arrows home to the conscience, and they will retire from the sanctuary in deep humiliation of mind; not eulogising or

* The venerable Chalmers.

censuring the preacher, but condemning themselves : and looking to Jesus, the great Physician, and the balm of Gilead as the only remedy for sin. Behold that child awaking from death to life. (2 Kings iv. 33—35.) But how did the prophet of God act ? By standing at a distance from the cold corpse. Oh, no ; he went very near the child. 'He lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and he stretched himself upon the child, and the flesh of the child waxed warm.' And if you have the prophet's anxiety to restore dead souls to life, you will not only stand in the pulpit, but will come down to their private dwellings ; you will draw very near to them, and in holy earnestness you will talk to every member of the flock ; comforting the aged, guiding and guarding the young, strengthening the weak hands, and confirming the feeble knees : and you will be loved of all, prayed for by all, and, under the blessing of God, your pastoral instruction and paternal love will unlock the obstinate sinner's heart, and, surrendering himself to Jesus, he will say, 'God is with you of a truth.' Philip was sent by the Lord to preach to one soul. With alacrity he executed the commission ; and the eunuch of Ethiopia, it is said, became a burning and shining light over the dark land of Abyssinia. And when you are entering a rich mansion or an humble cottage, do so under the impression that you may beget principles and feelings by your visit, which may not only save one family, or one person, but these souls, enlightened and regenerated through your instrumentality, may blaze abroad the glad news of salvation, multiply your instructions a hundred-fold, and become missionaries and co-workers with you in the vineyard of the Lord. Let me advise you to beware of *sameness in your exhortations* in this department of your labour. It requires much prayerful study and much experience to do it well. Your subjects should always be varied according to the spiritual state of each family : the Scriptures you read, the prayer you offer, the instruction you administer, should be especially suited to each particular case. Besides, if you thus deal skilfully and faithfully in every house, your own mind will be correspondingly enlarged by an immense accumulation of doctrinal and practical knowledge. These pastoral visits will be among the holiest and happiest scenes of

your life. The aged will rise up when you enter, and hail you as an ambassador of Christ ; the senior children, when catechism, and psalms, and hymns, are all repeated, will press you to remain yet a little longer ; and even the little ones, instead of looking on you as an object of terror, will gather round your knees, each one pressing to be nearer than another, while their smiling happy faces indicate the plastic mind that may be moulded as you please. Love begets love ; confidence begets confidence ; attention begets attention. And if ever you expect a loving, confiding, attentive, prosperous church, you will be faithful, and constant, and affectionate in pastoral visitation. In England especially, my beloved brother, we are loudly called to the discharge of this duty. *In this country it is awfully neglected.* I have been dismayed to find among *Churchmen and Dissenters*, that regular pastoral visitation is the exception, and the neglect of it the distressing rule. The complaint is general, that churches are not thriving, that religion is not advancing in city or country. I confess I am not amazed at it. Nay, I should be amazed if it were otherwise, while apostolic example is so grossly neglected. Oh, then, for the sake of our dear brethren of other denominations—for the advancement of the cause of truth—for the glory of our Divine Master—let us consider them, to provoke them to this good work, this work of faith and labour of love ; and while we are blessed in our own souls and our own churches, we shall be made a blessing to all around us. Finally, I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things—and be thou ' an example of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.' "

THE following Sermon, on " The Bible ; an Inspired Revelation, and a sufficient Rule of Faith and Morals," was preached by Mr. Wilson, at the close of the year 1844, to the Congregation assembling in the Presbyterian Church, River Terrace, London :—

"The law of the Lord is perfect."—*Psalm* xix. 7.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—2 *Timothy* iii. 16, 17.

"The great object of all religion is, to instruct us in the knowledge and service of God. To accomplish this important end, two volumes have been presented to us — the volume of Nature, and the volume of Revelation. In many respects they bear a mutual resemblance, and are worthy of the constant study of every reflecting mind. That God has given them both for our spiritual guidance, is perfectly manifest from the Psalm from which part of our text is selected. 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.' It is thus evident, from the Psalmist's words, that the *volume of Nature* is calculated to give instruction in the knowledge of God. And who can behold the sun in his radiant glory by day, and the moon shedding her pale lustre on our world by night, with all the stars that glitter in her train—who can mark the movements of the heavenly bodies, as they fly through space at an inconceivable and almost incredible velocity, and think of their amazing influences on one another, without acknowledging the *wisdom*, and *power*, and *goodness* of God?

"'The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

"'The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.'

"But the *volume of Revelation* gives instruction of a still higher order. 'The law of the Lord is *perfect*, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is *sure*, making wise the simple.' These two volumes are *the production of the same Divine Author*. With regard to the physical

world, 'God spake, and it was done ; He commanded, and it stood fast.' In like manner, as to the volume of Revelation, holy men of God spake it, and wrote it, as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. And, being the production of the omnipotent and omniscient God, both these instructors are *absolutely perfect.* The works of God are, in this respect, altogether different from the works of man. Behold that gorgeous building, or examine that exquisitely beautiful chronometer—they are as perfect as man can make them ; but that magnificent structure has been renewed, and enlarged, and altered—and that instrument, which displays so much ingenuity, has stopped in its movements, and has been repaired from time to time. But, if you survey the works of God, you cannot, and you dare not, attempt to add to their perfection. Who can add even one leaf to any tree, or one tint to the least flower in your garden, or one wing to the smallest insect that flutters in the summer's sun ? And so perfect is the Word of God, that 'if any man shall dare to add to it, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book ; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city.'

"In both these volumes there is a *wonderful variety.* Let us confine our observation to our own globe. If the earth were one level plain, it would be monotonous and uninteresting to the eye of the beholder. But yonder, a mountain is lost among the clouds in heaven—here, a valley is spread out in the greenest luxuriance ; there, is sea and land, and hill and dale, in endless diversity ; in one place you have a barren desert, in another a blooming and cultivated region ; there, is a continent scorched with a burning sun, and yonder an island bound up by an icy girdle, or covered with eternal snow. And in the Bible there is an equal variety—a variety suited to all the mental tastes and spiritual necessities of the children of God. Here is *doctrine* to edify the mind of one, and *precept* to guide another in the path of duty ; *biography,* presenting a gorgeous array of the noble army of patriarchs, and prophets, and apostles ; and *poetry* the most sublime, carrying the imagination away to the upper sanctuary. There is *parable,* through which nature and art speak to us a living language, as if they were

actually breathing and moving in our presence ; and here are the 'exceeding great and precious promises,' as the foundation of our faith, and hope, and joy, to cheer us in our pilgrimage from earth to heaven.

"Generally speaking, they are both *easily understood.* Is there an intelligent child trained in your Sabbath-school who could not tell that the *power* of God is seen in that lofty mountain, or in the hurricane that rages with tremendous fury ? And, is not that child capable of understanding the great compendium of Revelation, that 'this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners,' even the chief of sinners.' And yet remember, there are *mysteries* in both, that the most gigantic minds cannot comprehend. The bounty of God may be seen by every peasant in the waving harvest ; and yet it is recorded in the life of the renowned Galileo, that when he was imprisoned by his Holiness of Rome, because he dared to maintain the Copernican system of astronomy—that the sun stood still, while the earth and the other planets moved around it—in that cell where the philosopher lay, for what the Pope in his infallibility pronounced 'false in science, and heretical in religion,' he saw a straw carried by the wind across the floor, and he exclaimed, 'There is in that straw the clearest evidence of the being of a God, and there are mysteries in its formation that no human mind can fully comprehend.' It is just so in the Word of God. As the great and good Matthew Henry* quaintly says, there are passages in the Bible 'so plain that a child may wade through them, and others so deep that an elephant may swim in them.' Many parts of it are so plain that a child can at once comprehend them ;

* "I take this opportunity of commending to the members of my congregation the Commentaries of Scott, and Henry, and Brown, above all other expositions of the Scriptures. Parents are safe in using them in their families, and putting them into the hands of their children. And I would affectionately guard them against the whims and crudities that are daily issuing from the press, by men who do not understand, and cannot be confined to, the old, and simple, and solid doctrines of the Gospel—who are invariably propounding something new—and whose childish and freakish theology shows, in my opinion, the sad result of the novel and romance-reading of the last half century."

but what theologian, of the most enlightened understanding and most extensive research, can fully explain the doctrine (which I maintain is expressly revealed) of Trinity in unity, and unity in Trinity ?—who can reconcile the doctrine of the unchangeable and eternal decree of God with the free will of man ?—who can satisfactorily explain (what I hold is manifestly taught) how it is that the sovereign and eternally-electing love of God is perfectly consistent with the free offer of the Gospel to the whole world ? There are mysteries in Nature around us which we cannot fully understand : we cannot tell why that blade of grass is green, and not white or yellow. There are mysteries in your own constitution—the connexion between a perishing body and an immortal spirit —which cannot be explained. And there are mysteries in the Word of God, evidently revealed, yet equally far above the comprehension of the most exalted intellect.

The likeness, in this respect, between these two volumes has often struck me as extremely beautiful. There are a thousand level plains on the face of Nature on which a little child can sport the livelong day in perfect safety ; and, on the other hand, there are mountain-heights, away in the region of eternal snow, that no traveller has ever yet ascended. And, in like manner, there are a thousand passages in the Scriptures plain to the capacity of a child, and, blessed be God, the passages most essential to our soul's salvation are most easily understood. But, on the other hand, there are difficulties which, in our present imperfect state, we cannot and dare not profess to comprehend. This is reasonably to be expected. The Bible is the production of an Infinite Mind ; and if that great Being has in general stooped to the weakness of man's fallen and contracted intellect, is it wonderful if, in the same book, He should in some instances convince us that His thoughts are as far above our thoughts as the heavens are high above the earth—that the mind which is finite cannot fully grasp the productions of the Mind which is infinite—that here we see through a glass darkly, but yonder we shall see face to face—that here we prophecy in part, but in heaven we shall see as we are seen, and know even as we are known.

" My brethren, do not misunderstand me. It is not my design to teach you that these two volumes, as religious in-

structors, are of equal importance to man ; nay, the *Word* of God, as an instructor, is immeasurably superior to the *works* of God. It is said, that by the works of God, or the teachings of natural religion, you can learn something concerning three attributes of the Divine nature—the *wisdom*, and *goodness*, and *power* of God ; and, at the same time, when we think we can demonstrate the evidence of these three perfections from the works of Nature, we should never forget that we reason with minds enlightened in all these matters by the additional knowledge of Divine Revelation. The question is not merely how much we can learn from Nature's teaching under our present favourable circumstances, but how little could we learn—how much darker would our path be through the labyrinths of Nature, if we had not, in our investigations, the torch of Revelation in our hands. Oh how little did the wise and great men of Greece and Rome know of God from natural religion, unaccompanied and unaided as they were by the light of the Holy Scriptures ! They are a fair specimen of what the greatest minds can accomplish, in investigating the character of a great First Cause, through the mere works of His hands. And what did their researches amount to ? Nothing, or less than nothing, and vanity. 'They changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. They changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever !' But it is in the Word of God, and only in that Word, that we *clearly* learn, not merely of those three attributes, (the wisdom, and goodness, and power of God), but especially of the *grace*, and *mercy*, and *love* of God to His rebellious creatures. We venture to affirm, that all the philosophy of man, brought to bear upon natural religion, could not have shed as much light over the destinies of our race as we derive from one single text of Scripture—'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"But a question of immense magnitude, of vast importance, arises here—Is the Bible the book of God ? What is canonical Scripture ? And is it an inspired and infallible oracle from Heaven ? How many among you can answer

this question ? This is a matter, lying at the foundation of our faith, which, with the great majority of Christians, is generally taken for granted. Believe me, this ought not so to be ; for, without a knowledge of the *evidence* on which the truth of your Bible rests, your faith in it cannot be productive of that enlarged hope, and solid peace, which would otherwise be felt in a mind enlightened and convinced as to the genuineness, authenticity, and inspiration of the Scriptures. You are aware that we utterly reject the books called the Apocrypha, as forming no part of the Word of God ; nay, we repudiate the idea of binding up such trash along with the books of inspiration, as calculated to deceive unwary souls ; and we are convinced, that with equal, if not greater propriety, might the works of Stackhouse, or Milner, or Mosheim, or M'Crie, be bound up along with the Holy Scriptures ; and we are fully convinced that these works would be more calculated to edify the church of God than the books which contain the ridiculous stories of Tobit and his dog, or the liver and heart and gall of the greedy fish, or the absurd narrative of Bel and the Dragon. We have known deluded Romanists who have had a folio copy of the Apocrypha alone, and they read it with all reverence, believing that they possessed the treasure of inspired Revelation ; and surely it is high time that in the church and the family, the reading-desk and the closet, these books should be separated for ever by all Protestants from having any supposed connexion with the oracles of God. That the Apocrypha is not inspired—that it is the production of the weak mind of man—is acknowledged even upon its own pages. We thus read, in 2 Maccabees xv. 38, at the close of the apocryphal history, 'Here will I make an end. *And, if I have done well, and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired; but, if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto.*' Hence, it bears upon its own face the stamp of human ingenuity and human weakness. The author does not even pretend that the Spirit of Light guided him in his writings, but he confesses it was his own effort—perfect or imperfect, it was the best he could accomplish. Oh how different is this from the last verses of the Bible ! Revelation xxii. 18, 19, 'For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man

shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book ; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.' How silly and senseless the conclusion of the one—how awfully solemn and affecting the termination of the other !

"Rejecting the Apocrypha, therefore, from the Inspired Volume, we hold that the Old Testament Scriptures are comprised in thirty-nine books, beginning with Genesis and ending with Malachi. And if you ask us why we so confidently maintain this position, we do it on the following high and incontrovertible authority — It pleased God to make the Jewish church the depository of the Sacred Scriptures. For hundreds of years they had the exclusive possession of them. They preserved them with awful veneration. The very divisions that existed among the Jews made one party jealously watchful of the mode in which the other handled the Divine oracles : the slightest interpolation or subtraction would have been blazed abroad over the whole nation ; so that, in transcribing the Scriptures, the most extraordinary minuteness was observed, lest even a single jot or tittle might be altered. We have thus the solemn verdict of the Jewish church, to which God originally gave His Word. *They held, as canonical, precisely the same inspired books as those on which we, as Protestants, rest our faith;* and thus we have in our favour the verdict of that people who had exclusive possession of them from the days of Moses to the days of Christ, and who are, therefore, indisputably the best judges in deciding what is inspired and what is apocryphal Scripture.

"But God, in His adorable providence, has furnished us with *another remarkable testimony* on this subject—remarkable, inasmuch as it is not the testimony of a Jew, who might have been interested in the result of the argument, nor of a Christian, who might have leaned to the side of Christianity —but it is the testimony of a heathen, and of a heathen emperor, who cannot be supposed to have been in collusion either with Judaism on the one hand, or with Christianity on the other. It is related that Ptolemy Philadelphus,

king of Egypt, caused the Alexandrian, or Septuagint copy of the Old Testament, to be translated from the Hebrew into Greek about 282 years before the birth of Christ. In this translation, from which many of the most ancient copies of the Scriptures have been taken, the very same number of books are contained that we hold to be canonical; and so highly was this version esteemed by the Jews, and by the early Christians, that it was constantly used in the public worship of God. We therefore protest against the Apocrypha, and against Rome for thrusting it on the Church of Christ as a part of inspired Revelation.

"With regard to the books of the New Testament, beginning with Matthew and ending with Revelation, which we hold to be canonical, we have the universal testimony of the early Christians, that no other books beside these were admitted by the churches. The venerated Haldane says, that several apocryphal writings were published under the name of Jesus Christ and His Apostles, but they were not acknowledged in the first or second century. 'And,' says Paley, 'beside our Gospels, &c., no Christian history, claiming to be written by an apostle or apostolical man, is quoted within 300 years after the birth of Christ by any writer now extant or known, or, if quoted, is quoted with marks of censure and rejection.' We therefore hold, that the Inspired Volume consists of those *sixty-six books;* and that they are proved to be Divine by a mass of evidence more multifarious and conclusive than can be advanced for the genuineness and authenticity of any other book in the world.

"It has been well said, that the Bible could not have been written by bad men; because, in many of its awful sentences, they would have been writing their own condemnation. What godless man, for instance, would deliberately have published to the world that 'the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.' Nay, these are the very statements which excite the hatred and opposition of vile men against the Sacred Scriptures. Neither could the Bible have been written by good men—men of truth—because they would thus have made themselves liars; for they assure us that God is their Author—that, as our text declares, 'all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.' It is, therefore, inconceivable that

the Bible could have been written by bad men, equally inconceivable that good men wrote it, and we are shut up to the conclusion that the God of Truth is its Author.

"We prove the Scriptures to be the Word of God from the miracles that were wrought by the inspired penmen. If Moses, and Peter, and Paul, had been base impostors—writing a book for the purpose of deluding the world—it is of all things most unlikely, that God would have permitted or enabled them to do those extraordinary works which are universally attributed to their instrumentality. These miracles—the raising of the dead, separating the waters of the Red Sea, giving sight to the blind and feet to the lame—were infinitely beyond the reach of human power; they are all manifestly the works of God's hand; and, therefore, those whom He made His instruments in performing them, carry with them the seal and the sanction of divinely commissioned agents. The enemies of Christianity, indeed, have endeavoured to evade the force of the miracles, and the testimony derived from them, by ascribing them to diabolical influence; but that such works were performed, neither friends nor foes have attempted to deny. Besides, many of the miracles related in Scripture have been strikingly and unintentionally confirmed in the writings of heathen historians. The extraordinary judgment which the Lord poured out upon Sodom and Gomorrah is manifestly referred to by Tacitus. He states, that certain powerful cities near the same place were destroyed by thunder and lightning; and Strabo also testifies, that there were many traces of this catastrophe in his day. These are valuable testimonies, coming from avowed enemies; for both historians, the Greek as well as the Roman, were bitterly opposed to Messiah and the early Christians. About the same time, Lucian, a Greek writer, and a scoffer at all religion, heathen as well as Christian, unwittingly confirms, to a great extent, the Mosaic account of the deluge. He relates that there had been a flood, by which all the inhabitants of the world were swept away, and that a new race sprang from Deucalion, a Scythian. He farther informs us, that 'the aborigines were arrogant, full of mischief, inhospitable to strangers, and that therefore they were overtaken by the severity of justice.' Various Pagan writers speak of

Moses as a lawgiver—as a man of profound wisdom—of Israel going out of Egypt into Palestine, and seizing on the city of Jerusalem. And Diodorus Siculus states, that the Ichthyophagi, who lived near the Red Sea, had a story among them, that the whole bay was once laid bare to the very bottom, and that the waves returned with a tremendous revulsion. And to this day, the people who live contiguous to it keep up the tradition, that a great army was once drowned in its waters.

"Brethren, I pray you also to mark this characteristic in all the miracles of Moses and of Christ: they were not like the doings of an impostor—not like pretended Popish miracles, *wrought invariably in the 'sight of the beast,'* (Rev. xiii. 14), in a nunnery or monastery, where none but the dupes of the superstition could see them. The miracles of Moses were wrought in the sight of his enemies—the foes of his faith—in the presence of Pharaoh and his magicians, and they were forced to exclaim, 'This is the finger of God!' The miracles of Christ and His apostles were also *wrought publicly*—in crowded cities—before multitudes of enemies as well as friends; they performed cures upon notorious characters; a man who was blind from his birth, or lame from his mother's womb. And these things were not contradicted; nay, the rage of the Jews was excited in a tenfold degree, *because they could not contradict them*, and because great multitudes flocked to Jesus and His disciples, having seen the wonderful works which they performed. These miracles are, therefore, in my estimation, like a mighty fortification built by the hand of God in the field of Revelation, which neither man nor devil, neither sophistry on the one hand, nor scepticism on the other, shall ever be able to destroy.

"Again, *the fulfilment of prophecy* proves that the Bible is an inspired Revelation. You know not what shall be on to-morrow. Futurity is to you like darkest midnight; and no lamp of human knowledge can cast the feeblest gleam over it. But, lo! here are poor unlettered men proclaiming to the world what shall take place an hundred, or a thousand, or two thousand years before the occurrence. Sceptics have endeavoured to deny this, and to make it appear that the prophecies were written either immediately before, or

after the event had taken place. This objection, however, is set aside by the important fact to which I have already alluded, with regard to the Alexandrian translation of the Scriptures, which fixes all the prophecies of the Old Testament at least two hundred and eighty years before any fulfilment of them recorded in the New Testament. These prophecies, besides, are not delivered in vague language, which might be variously applied ; but the language is most definite—names, and circumstances, and dates, are particularly referred to ; and the fulfilment is not of a general and indistinct character, but is as definite and explicit as the original prophecy. Let us examine one or two cases.

"In Ezekiel xxvii. 7, 8, to 23, and Ezekiel xxvi. 14, you will find it stated, that Tyre, once the London of the commercial world—the renowned city that was strong in the sea, whose merchants were princes, and whose traffickers were the honourable of the earth—would yet become like the top of a rock, a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea. That this has been fulfilled to the very letter, all the travellers who have visited the place have testified, though some of them have been bitterly opposed to Christianity. Maundrel says, that its 'present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, subsisting chiefly upon fishing, who seem to be preserved, by Divine Providence, as a *visible argument* how God hath fulfilled His Word concerning Tyre.' And even Volney states, that 'the whole village of Tyre contains only fifty or sixty poor families, who live obscurely on the produce of their ground, and a *trifling fishery* ;—the houses are wretched huts, ready to crumble into ruins.'

"Not less convincing is the prophecy with regard to the Jewish nation. The most remarkable prediction concerning that people is contained in Deut. xxviii. 30—57, where, among a variety of awful judgments, it is foretold that the enemy would besiege them in all their gates, and that in the famine, not only the delicate man, but the tender and delicate woman, who would not adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground, would eat the fruit of their own body, the flesh of their own sons and daughters. This was *literally fulfilled*, with horrible minuteness; and the account of its fulfilment is not from a Christian, who might be sus-

pected of collusion, but by Josephus, a Jewish historian, and a decided enemy to the religion of Jesus Christ. 'But why describe,' says he, 'what the famine brought *on men* in their eating inanimate things, when I am going to relate a matter of fact, of which it is horrible to speak, and incredible when heard. There was a *certain woman*, whose name was Mary, eminent for her family and wealth—all she had was carried off in the siege: at last, under the maddening effects of hunger, she took her sucking child from her bosom, and slew him, and roasted him, and eat the one-half of him! when the smell produced by the roasting of his flesh attracted the hungry multitude to her dwelling, who were filled, at the revolting sight, with horror and amazement.'

"In the Old Testament you have also every particular foretold with regard to the birth, life, sufferings, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ—predictions as minute as if they had been written by an eye-witness after the transactions had occurred. So remarkable is the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah in this respect, that the Jews pass it over in their synagogues in public worship, in consequence of its undeniable application to Jesus Christ. And who can read Zechariah vi. 12, 13, with an unprejudiced mind, without confessing that it is a prophetic description of the apostacy of Judas, his betrayment of our Lord for thirty pieces of silver, and the outlay of that 'price of blood' in buying the potter's field to bury strangers in.

"But while all these prophecies and their fulfilment are incontrovertible evidences that the Scriptures are from heaven, I confess that the prediction in Micah v. 2, in relation to the *birthplace* of Immanuel, seems to me peculiarly remarkable. 'Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet *out of thee* shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.' An ignorant sceptic might object, and say that Mary, the mother of Jesus, had an interest in the fulfilment of this prophecy—her love for her own son—for the establishment of His kingdom on the earth, might induce her to reside at this renowned city till after Christ's birth. That there was no collusion on her part, is demonstrated by the circumstances that took place. Joseph and Mary had been residing in the city of Nazareth, in the province of Galilee, about a hundred miles

from Bethlehem. A decree was issued at this juncture by Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed ; and Joseph was constrained *by the imperial mandate to go to Bethlehem, his own city,* to be taxed, with Mary, his espoused wife, she being great with child ;—'and so it was, that *while they were there* the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, and she brought forth her first-born son.' Now, my brethren, ponder well every part of this narrative. If Joseph and Mary had left Nazareth for Bethlehem of their own good-will and choice, then the whole tribe of sceptics would have exclaimed that they did so, *knowing the prediction,* for the express purpose of fulfilling it ! Had they been induced to remove by a man like John the Baptist, who was 'waiting for the consolation of Israel,' the clamour of the objectors would have been equally strong. But who is this that disturbs the repose of this anxious couple ? Mary is very unable to travel in her present state over the mountains of Palestine—the law, however, must be obeyed—the taxation must be borne, even in her distressing condition—and under the tyranny and oppression of the emperor, *they must go* to Bethlehem !

"'Bold Infidelity ! turn pale, and die.'

Did Cæsar plan all this, that ancient prophecy might appear to be from heaven ? Was the emperor of Rome in collusion with the infant Jesus ? Did heathenism forget its idols, and become the patron of the dawning religion of Immanuel ? Did the eagle of Rome lose its ferocity for a time, and spread its wings over the tender Lamb of God ? No, no ; but He who guides the stars in their courses, and has the hearts and designs of all men under His control—He it was that predicted this great event ;—it was He that moved Augustus to issue the decree—and thus He made the affairs of that mighty empire subservient to the kingdom of Christ —and even the oppressive laws of Augustus, the very instrument of accomplishing one of the most striking prophecies that shine upon the page of Revelation.

"4. *The harmony of Scripture* is another proof of its inspiration. By this I mean, that part agrees with part—that there is no contradiction between one part and another—that

the entire volume forms one perfect and harmonious Revelation. The Bible was not written by one penman in one year; but, from Genesis to Revelation, the writing of it occupied about one thousand six hundred years; and yet, although it was written in three different languages, and in different nations of the world, by men who had never seen each other, and had no correspondence with one another—men of different habits, and customs, and tastes—who have written on subjects the most diversified; on chronology, the most minute in its very dates; history, the most particular in all its details; biography, specifying the words and actions of the individual; and all embodying a system of doctrine and precept the most extensive, and couched in every varied form and style—didactic, and abstruse, and poetical in the highest degree; yet the Holy Bible stands like a magnificent building, planned centuries ago by one great architect; and though its erection has been carried on for many years by a vast number of workmen, collected from several nations, still the same order is preserved throughout—the same plan is followed most exactly from its foundation to its loftiest pinnacle—and it rises before you, the wonder of the age in which it was erected, and an object of attraction to all future generations. It is just so with the Word of God: notwithstanding all the diversity in its construction to which I have referred, yet the same beautiful harmony is exhibited from its commencement to its close—the same holy and loving character of God gives a brilliancy to all its pages—the same view of man, in his primeval, fallen, and redeemed condition—the same account of Jesus—of sin and holiness, of heaven and hell. On what principle is this to be accounted for? A book constructed in such a manner, and by such instrumentality, never before was presented to man; and, taking all the premises into account, the only rational conclusion is, that the same Divine Being held the pen, and guided the hands of those who wrote, and that holy men of God spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

"Again, there is a *candour, and honesty, and impartiality* about the whole book, that could not be expected in the writings of an impostor. Moses, the lawgiver of the Jews, writes their history in such a manner that it is quite evident he conceals nothing—that he relates the truth, and the whole

truth. Had he been a man of worldly policy, he would at least have touched but slightly on the failings of his countrymen, and have brought out in bold relief whatever traits of national and ecclesiastical excellence belonged to them, that thus their system of religion might the more effectually be palmed upon the world. But, instead of this, Moses relates with the utmost openness and fidelity the faults of his countrymen—their insensibility and ingratitude toward God in the midst of his miraculous operations—their desire to return to the land of slavery, so that they might enjoy the fleshpots of Egypt—their proneness to idolatry in its most degraded form—and the judgments that befel them, in consequence of which the bones of thousands were scattered over the deserts of Arabia. Ah, true, the sceptic will reply ; but does he tell his own imperfections ? Yes ; with all possible honesty, he relates his unwillingness to go to Pharaoh to demand the emancipation of his brethren, notwithstanding the positive command of Jehovah ;—his weakness and unbelief are not hidden here ;—and, provoked by their murmuring, and losing for a time the meekness that adorned him, he tells us, that in a fit of passion he broke all the commandments of his God.

" David also candidly reveals his aggravated sin in the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah. We hear his groans of contrition, and see his penitential tears, while a veil might have been cast over his bloody transgression. And in the New Testament we are told of Judas, one of the apostles of Christ, forsaking the Author of Christianity, and betraying Him into the hands of His murderers ; and that Peter, another apostle, with strong imprecations denied Him. Nay, the very *secrecy* of their lives, their *private differences*, are exposed. We are informed that Peter and Paul, two apostolic teachers, had the most serious misunderstanding, and that Paul withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed ; and again, that on another occasion the contention was so sharp between Barnabas and Paul, that these two divine messengers ' departed asunder the one from the other.' If these histories had been written by a virulent opponent of Scripture to expose and vilify it, you would naturally have expected such a disclosure from his pen ; but when you reflect that they were written by the founders of our religion,

then there is an honesty in the relation that proves it must have issued from the fountain of perfect truth. And the infidel seizes on these acknowledgments of sin, and draws poison from them to his own soul, and attempts to stab the Revelation itself, on account of the moral infirmities of its defenders. On the other hand, these candid avowals of sin are to me among the strongest proofs of the truth of my Bible. If these men had described themselves as unspotted and angelic beings, caught in no snare, and tainted by no sin, I would then have concluded the whole was an imposture. But the description of good and bad men precisely answers to what I see around me every day in my intercourse with the world. As face answereth to face in a glass, so the moral condition of the world and the church, even at the distance of one thousand eight hundred years, is most faithfully delineated ;—and, while we have to deplore the weakness of the best of men in our present imperfect state, as they deplored it themselves ;—yet the candid confession of their infirmity forms an overwhelming argument for the simplicity, and honesty, and truth of the Divine Revelation.

"I have unlimited confidence in the writings of the apostles, when I examine the *manner they testified of the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.* They relate the most minute facts in the life of their Master ; and, having observed His public and private conduct, still they adhere to Him with unswerving constancy. No, the objector will reply ; Judas forsook Him, and renounced His religion. True, he did deny Jesus ; but, if you believe the narrative of the betrayment, *you are bound to give credence to the catastrophe that followed.* And we maintain, that the history of Judas—the stings of a guilty conscience for having betrayed innocent blood—and his rushing as a suicide into the presence of his Judge, is an incontrovertible attestation to the character of the Messiah. If the death of martyrs prove the sincerity of their profession, then I claim the death of this wretched martyr to infidelity and antichristianism as a triumphant vindication, not only of the truths delivered by Jesus, but also by the eleven brethren, from whom he apostatized ! These eleven apostles saw their Master seized, judged, and condemned, and crucified between two thieves, and His cold and lifeless body sealed in

the tomb of Joseph. Their faith and hope were buried for a time in that sepulchre. They drooped, they staggered, they doubted. But the sun burst from behind the cloud.

"'Hell and the grave combined their force
To hold our Lord in vain :
Sudden the Conqueror arose,
And burst the feeble chain.'

"They saw His heavenly countenance again—they heard once more that voice which had often cheered their souls ; faith, and hope, and love reanimated their minds ; and though yesterday they fled like frighted lambs when their Shepherd was slaughtered—to-day, when they see Him risen from the dead, triumphant over His enemies—and prophecy and promise concentrated in His resurrection, they are filled with the boldness of lions, ready to suffer and to die for His cause : and one of them—that very Peter who had lately denied Him—comes forth to preach His resurrection, not away at a distance from the scene of conflict, not in the midst of chosen friends, but in the city of Jerusalem, where his Saviour's blood had been shed—in the midst of the men and women who had uttered the horrid cry, 'Away with Him, away with Him ! crucify Him, crucify Him !' He charges the murder of the Holy One upon them, and *three thousand* are converted to the Lord—three thousand unprejudiced witnesses to the great truth of His resurrection.

"The infidel, however, may say—'*Ah, they gained something by all this.*' Believe me, if they had gained worldly wealth or honour, it would have weakened my faith to a considerable degree in their testimony. But, instead of gaining, they lost all they had. Miraculously enabled to speak fifteen or sixteen different languages, with which they were previously unacquainted—inspired thus by the Holy Ghost to labour, and suffer, and die, they went forth without purse or scrip, as sheep in the midst of hungry wolves ; and, though every prayer, and sermon, and song of praise, exposed them to persecution, yet they persevered in their work of faith, till, with the exception of the beloved John, one after another died a martyr's death, and earned a martyr's crown. I can rest my faith upon that Bible and on that religion which is bedewed by the tears, and consecrated by

the blood of such disinterested and devoted followers of a crucified Redeemer.

"If, indeed, they had died in vindication of a book that flattered their prejudices, or, like the Koran of the Arabian impostor, gave license to the gratification of the sinful passions of our nature, we might have looked on their martyrdom as we look on the frenzy of enthusiasts, who have suffered in behalf of the most degrading and demoralizing superstitions. But the Word of God, in behalf of which they suffered and died, *is opposed to all that man naturally loves.* It tells him, that his sinful passions must be mortified—that he must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. It discloses an awful hell, into which every thoughtless and godless man must sink for ever ; and it opens up to him a glorious heaven, not like the heaven of Mahomet—an Eastern harem—a scene of prostitution suited to the taste of his licentious disciples : but, into the heaven of our Bible, 'no whoremonger, idolater, or murderer, neither whosoever loveth or maketh a lie, shall ever enter.' It was for this pure and elevating Revelation that these martyrs bled and died. The Spirit that inspired the Scriptures, inspired them with courage to seal their testimony with their blood. And taking all these *external and internal evidences into account,* we hold that the Bible is the book of books—that it has 'God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter.'

"My text assures us that the Word of God is '*perfect.*' It is perfect in its own essential character, and absolutely perfect as a comprehensive and infallible rule of faith and morals. To this latter idea I ask your attention only for a few moments. Believing that it is a perfect and inspired Revelation, we think it manifestly follows, that it is blasphemous in the highest degree to presume to add to it, just as it is at the peril of our souls if we dare to subtract from it. What does the Church of God want, that is not found in the Bible? Do you want *doctrine,* to edify and strengthen the mind—it teaches you all about God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the fall of man, and redemption through the righteousness of Christ alone—the work of the Spirit in regeneration and sanctification—the final destiny of man, either in eternal happiness or misery ! Do

you wish to be instructed in the ordinances of religion—here all is perfect. In the *praise* of God, it teaches you to sing with the spirit and the understanding—in *prayer*, whatever we ask the Father, through Jesus our intercessor, according to His will, we are assured He will grant us—in *preaching*, we have the most splendid examples from Christ and His apostles. Am I called to administer the ordinance of *baptism*—I want no rite or ceremony for my guidance, decreed by any man or body of men—my commission is to baptize with water, not with oil or salt, or sign of the cross, or holy breathings, or any of the other trumpery of Rome, but simply to sprinkle with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Do I dispense the holy *communion*—the law of the Lord is a perfect guide, and not the blasphemous ceremonies, and additions, and subtractions of men ; the directions are most minute, as to the *attitude* (Luke xxii. 14) of our Lord and the communicants—the *elements* to be used, and the very *words* to be pronounced in the administration. If you sin against one another, or if you sin against the church, the mode of procedure with the offender is laid down with all possible clearness. If you want a pastor settled over you in the Lord, here is your guide and the charter of your liberty, in calling him who is to minister among you in holy things ; and when nominated by you, if found qualified for the office, he is to be ordained in no other way than 'by the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery.' (1 Tim. iv. 14.) Whether you be a husband or wife, a parent or child, a widow, or fatherless, a stranger or an orphan, poor or rich, in sickness or in health, in life or at death, depressed under remaining corruption, or rejoicing under the light of Jesus' countenance, backsliding from God, or pressing forward to the gates of the heavenly city—whatever be your condition as to body or soul, time or eternity, the Bible is in all these cases and conditions like a perennial fountain, where your wants may be abundantly supplied.

"From these positions it follows, as a manifest corrollary, that neither the Independent, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, nor Methodist churches, nor 'He who sitteth in the temple of God above all that is called God' has authority to *decree anything in addition to the Bible in matters of faith or worship*. If the law of the Lord be *perfect as to doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness, that*

the man of God may be perfect in every good word and work, then, I ask, what is wanted more than this? The Bible, as an instrument, is able to make man *perfect in all doctrine and duty;* and can rites and ceremonies invented in Rome, or London, or Edinburgh, make him *more than perfect!* Is not the attempt as illogical on the one hand as it is presumptuously blasphemous on the other? The tendency of all human traditions, and rites, and ceremonies, *apart from and beyond the Bible*, has been to lead the human mind from the clear light of God's Word, away back into the darkness that hung over the church and the world in the middle ages. And it is a singular coincidence, that, *just in proportion to the darkness of the age*, were the senseless rites that were formed; just according as the Bible was a sealed book, traditions and ceremonies swarmed in the marshes of ignorance and superstition, like the frogs in the land of Egypt.

"How, then. it may be asked, can we approve of the confessions of faith that were issued by all the churches of the Reformation? We only approve of them as *interpreters* of the Word of God—not as infallible authorities in the church, but simply as guides to the proper meaning of the Scriptures. If any one wish to enter my church as a member, or is perplexed about certain texts, knowing that there are different opinions held by different theologians, and if he should ask me, How readest thou?—how does your church understand this text or that doctrine? I would reply, In this confession you have an exposition of my views, and the views of my church, as to the meaning of the Scriptures. But this is not our *standard of faith;* the Bible alone is our standard. This is *merely an interpreter of our infallible standard*, according to which all doctrines, and traditions, and ceremonies must stand or fall. Neither, in this sense, do we object to traditions. Nay, like the Apostles of Christ, we urge upon all Christians that they be constantly handing down traditions from father to son, that the generations to come after us may walk in the ways of the Lord; but if these traditions be not in perfect accordance with Scripture, if in one iota they be opposed to it, or held up as of independent and infallible authority—if they be anything but the *letter and spirit of the Bible, coming through the living voice of the speaker*, then we reject them, as 'wood, and hay, and stubble,' fit only to be consumed. To the law and testi-

mony, if we speak not according to these, it is because there is no truth in us. We place tradition and confessions in the hononrable situation of expounders of the law, but we elevate the Word of God on the lofty pillar of heaven's infallibility, and we inscribe on this majestic and immovable column, 'THE BIBLE, AND THE BIBLE ONLY, IS THE RELIGION OF PROTESTANTS.'

"Beloved brethren, read the Word of God—read it daily—read it prayerfully. Never, never read it but in the spirit and exercise of prayer. It is the Spirit's own word, and He will seal it on your heart, if you seek His sacred agency. Has not your bosom kindled with admiration when you have read of the independent and noble Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily, that they might know the truth of God. Be ye like them. Search the Scriptures as the miner searcheth in the mine for gold; search them like the merchantman seeking for goodly pearls, and ye shall assuredly find the words of eternal life.

"Is the Bible *food* for the believer? Get your portion of spiritual meat in daily season. Is it *light?* Let it be a light to your feet, and a lamp to your path. It is a *chart*, and thousands have been shipwrecked on the sea of life, by the rocks and the quicksands that surrounded them, because they despised its guidance, and followed the forbidden course that leads to certain destruction. It is a *letter* written in love to man. Christian parents, if you had a son who thoughtlessly enlisted, and was sent to India, from whom you have not heard for many a year, at last a long-expected letter arrives—you fly to that office to receive it with all a parent's anxiety—you get the letter, and clasp it to your beating heart—you open it, and read it—and as friend after friend comes to hear of your once thoughtless son, you think it no drudgery to read it over and over again. Oh beloved, is it thus you esteem the Word of God? It is a letter sent, not from India, but from heaven—not from an unfeeling and ungrateful child, but from a faithful and merciful Redeemer; it is written by His own Spirit, and sealed by His own blood; and if you have true love to Christ, you will read this book with heavenly affection, and esteem it as sweeter than honey, yea, than the honey that droppeth from the comb. It is the *will* of God to man. It is your Father's will. He has left you in it a blessed legacy. Oh! if a rich friend in England had made a will in your favour,

with what anxiety would you seek for that document and peruse it. Here is an infinitely better will, about an infinitely richer inheritance—an 'inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' Ponder it from beginning to end. Alas! we do not esteem it according to its intrinsic value and importance, as God's great instrument for the sanctification of our souls. It is pressed on our attention in every mode of urgent appeal; it is multiplying in thousands and tens of thousands, in every beautiful and attractive form, and in almost every language that is spoken on the face of the earth, and the poorest in the land may have it if they choose, without money and without price; yet, like Israel in the desert of Arabia, when God showered the manna in abundance around their very tent doors, we despise this celestial manna, and call it 'light food,' and too often loathe it as a nauseous thing, unworthy of our study and our love. Ah! how many thousands, even in this great metropolis, prefer the lascivious novel to its venerable biography, the senseless and dissipating romance to its instructive and touching parables, and the polluting revelling song-book to its sublime and captivating poetry? It has been often said, that we undervalue blessings according to the facility with which we can obtain them. Were we in the same circumstances of our dear brethren and sisters in Madeira, who are at this moment bearing the hottest persecution of Popery, merely for reading the blessed Word of Life, we would clasp our Bibles more eagerly to our heart. In the days that are gone—never, we trust, to return in Britain—in the early dawn of the Reformation—our forefathers were chased like wild birds before the fowler for their attachment to the Holy Scriptures. They hid themselves in dens and caves in Scotland, and one held up the torch-light, and another guarded the mouth of the cave, while the little company within fed each other's souls with the precious doctrines of the book of God. The most exalted in this country in point of rank, and some of the most distinguished in the walks of literature and science, have a glory shed over their memory by their devoted attachment to the Scriptures. The lamented Lady Jane Grey had the crown of England on her head, but it only touched her temples, as an emblem of the enduring and brighter crown she wears in the kingdom of her God. She was executed at the age of sixteen; and, the night before her death, she bequeathed to her sister a Greek Testament,

accompanied by the following blessed remark, that I could wish engraven on the bosom of every young person in Britain, and throughout the world: 'I have sent you, my dear sister, a book, which, though it be not outwardly trimmed with gold, yet inwardly it is of more worth than all the precious mines of which the vast world can boast. It is the book, my only best and beloved sister, of the law of the Lord. It is the testament and last will which He bequeathed unto us wretched sinners, which shall lead on to the path of eternal joy. It will teach you how to live, and likewise how to die. If you apply yourself diligently to this book, seeking to direct your life according to the rule of the same, it shall win you more, and endow you with greater felicity, than the possession of all your father's land, and you shall be an inheritor of such riches as neither the covetous shall withdraw from you, nor the thief shall steal, nor the moth corrupt.' The learned Joshua Barnes carried about with him a valuable pocket Bible, which he read over at leisure hours about one hundred and twenty times. Susannah, Countess of Suffolk, for the last seven years of her life, read the whole Bible over twice every year. And Lady Frances Hobart read the Psalms over twelve times every year, the New Testament thrice, and the other parts of the Old Testament once. I hold up these great and godly personages for your admiration and your imitation. Like them, make the Word of God your constant companion. Read it, I implore you, till you love to read it. Look at yourself daily in this mirror of celestial purity, till you are changed into the lovely image of the Saviour it reveals. Read it daily in family and closet devotion, in youth and old age, in sickness and in health, and you will realise the sweet words of the poet,—

"'Precious Bible! what a treasure
  Does the Word of God afford:
All I want, for life or pleasure,
  Food or med'cine, shield or sword.
Let the world account me poor,
Having this, I want no more.'"

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